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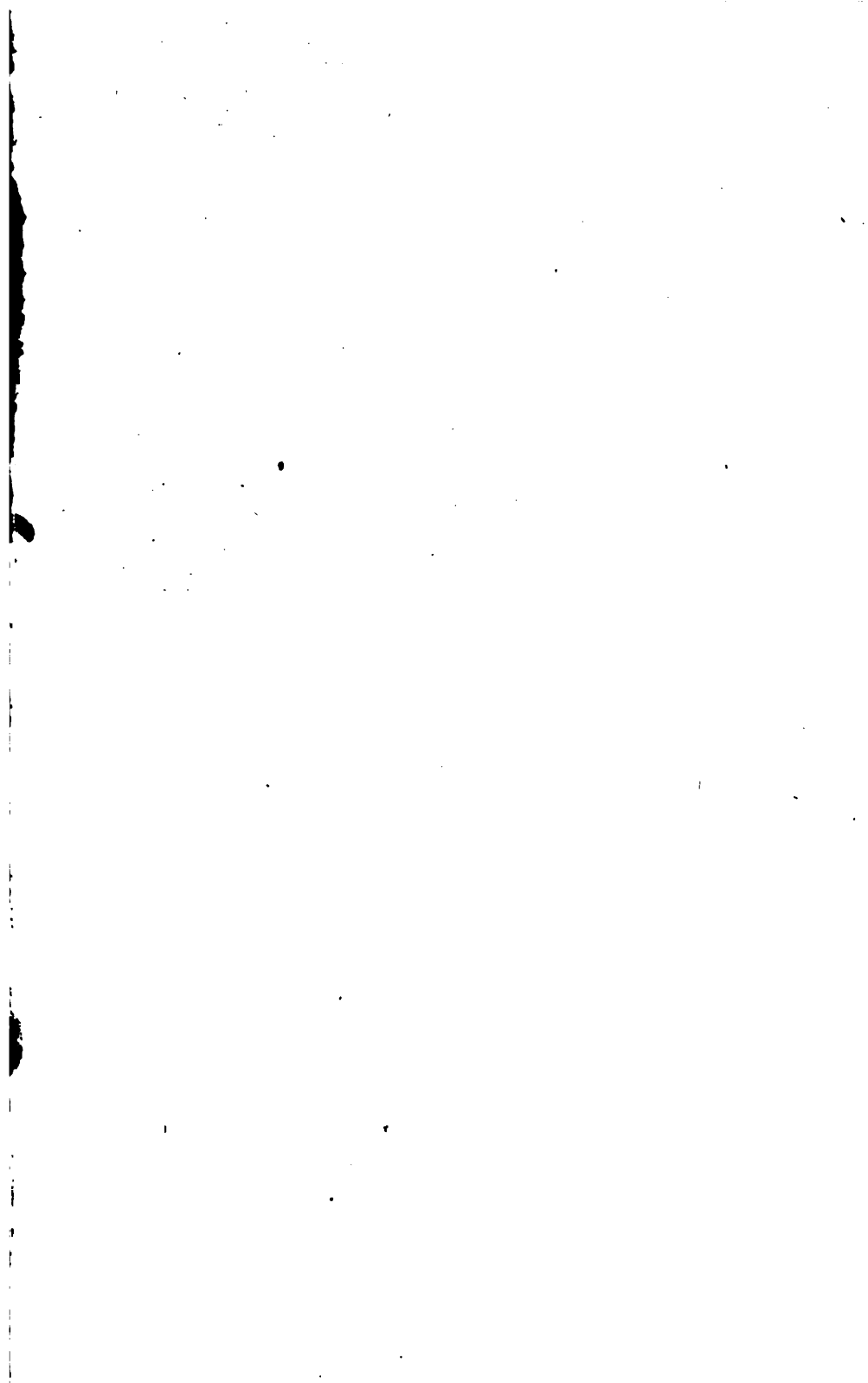
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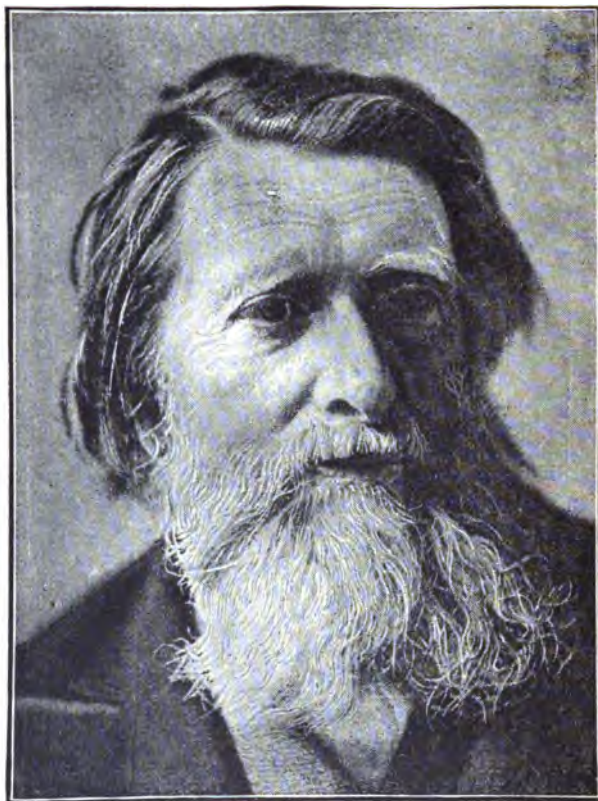
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JOHN RUSKIN:

A STUDY.

BY THE

REV. R. P. DOWNES

(*Editor of "Great Thoughts"*).

Oh, world, as God has made it! all is beauty;
And knowing this, is Love, and Love is Duty.
What further may be sought for or declared?

ROBERT BROWNING.

LONDON:

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PREFACE.

As an introduction to one of the loveliest spirits as well as one of the foremost writers of the nineteenth century—a writer whose finest creations are an unknown land to the great bulk of our population, this little book is sent forth. It is issued at a price which brings it within the reach of all, that thousands by its influence may be led to drink of the fountain by which we have been refreshed, and to rest beneath the shade where we have heard echoes of the voice of God. Should this end be realised, our reward will be great and our joy yet greater.

ROBERT P. DOWNES.

UPPER NORWOOD,

September, 1890.

THE LIFE OF JOHN RUSKIN.

CHAPTER I.

Sunrise and sunset wait alike on thee.
The Alpine peak hangs listening for thy voice
To tell its glory. Grandly, silently,
The clouds pause for thy coming, to rejoice
In one who feels their beauty. Torrents leap
To greet thee in the gorge; while up on high
The pine tree and the eagle vigil keep
For him who teaches how they soar and die.

Thy heart is human too, and loves to plead
For the swart toiler in the mill, or mine,
Or at the anvil, when the sweat-drops bead
His brow like jewels. The great law divine
Of labour, thou hast preach'd in spite of scorn
From loungers idling in the market-place,
And we will hearken while thou dost forewarn,
Lest our dear land should sink in ruin and disgrace.

INTRODUCTION.

IN the marvellous century which is now hasting to its golden setting, four great teachers have arisen to tell us what nobleness and beauty are—Thomas Carlyle, Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning, and John Ruskin. It is wise and fitting that we should recognise the presence and the power of these anointed prophets of the true and beautiful, and hail them with that "still small voice of gratitude which is sweeter than sweet music's melting fall." It is without question that our greatest benefactors are those who have instructed us in wisdom. For us they have toiled and striven. For us they have

scorned delights and lived laborious days. Let us therefore, amid the tumult of our busy life, "listen for the voices and watch for the lamps which God has toned and lighted to charm and guide us, that we may not learn their sweetness by their silence, nor their light by their decay."

It is difficult, as yet, to form an adequate estimate of the man with whom we have to deal in these pages. At the mountain's foot we cannot appreciate its proportions, or behold its gleaming crest outlined against the evening sky. And so we stand too near this great personality to grasp the full significance of his presence in our midst. We shall know him better when we are placed further from him, and when the glare and tumult of noon have given place to the twilight and calm of memory. Yet none can fail to recognise how nobly he has served his generation. While some in temples made with hands, have preached the "beauty of holiness," he in the temple made without hands, has preached the holiness of beauty. He has taught, as no other has, the glory of the visible universe, approaching nature with the ardour of a lover, the vision of a seer, and the scrutiny of a scientist. He has also impressed upon us the lesson that it is an ill return for God's gift of delight in beauty and order to leave our brethren festering in misery and despair. Keenly sensitive, and touched with divinest pity for suffering humanity—

"His heart is as a nerve o'er which do creep
The else unfelt oppressions of the earth,"

and we feel confident that if his "power of doing good were but equal to his will, he would ask no other heaven."

Merit struggling with obscurity has ever won his generous regard, and by his help and counsel many a struggling artist has placed his foot on the first rung

of the ladder which leads to fame and fortune. His keen perception of shams, his intense and penetrating power of analysis, together with his absolute and uncompromising honesty of opinion, have made him a most potent demolisher of false gods, while at the same time he has ever been eager to recognise and to pay homage to the true. Not seldom as he rebukes our selfishness, or pleads with our indifference, a flash of scorn gleams from the page, yet near his very scorn lie tears, as the rain near the lightning and thunder. Delighting in beauty, as a child in flowers, and ever recognising in it what Kingsley has called "a wayside sacrament," he hates the smoke and the thunder of echoing wheels from which "the angels of the presence" with weeping eyes and quivering pinions have fled. The truths he has taught us with so much passion and fervour, with such wealth of illustration, and with such power and melody of language, are the very bread of our moral and intellectual being.

They flame along the page with a dominant persistence which must be answered to, and it is our spiritual life to take heed to them, and our spiritual death to let them slip. The fine creations of his genius are the inheritance of the world, and their lofty teaching, wedded as it is to stately and majestic music, will keep his memory green as long as virtue is venerable, or the human soul responds to the beautiful and the good. Let us look then, look for our betterment and for the growth of all that is divinest in us upon this man, while he is yet with us, and not be of those, "who," to use his own words, "again and again have seen their noblest descend into the grave, and have thought it enough to garland the tombstone when they have not crowned the brow, and to pay the honour to the ashes which they had denied to the spirit."

BIRTH AND EARLY YOUTH.

Unlike many who, by the sheer force of transcendent genius, have leaped to fame and place despite all hindrance, the lot of John Ruskin has been cast in favoured places. He was born in London on the 8th of February, 1819, and is the son of a merchant of high principle and blameless integrity. He frequently refers to his father, in the letters of "Fors Clavigera," in terms of filial affection and regard; and on the granite above his grave he has written the brief but expressive epitaph, "He was an entirely honest merchant." His mother was a woman of great sensibility, at once very affectionate and very exacting, and she had it deeply in her heart to make an Evangelical clergyman of him, looking confidently forward to the time when he should be at least a Bishop; but, he says, "I had an aunt more Evangelical than my mother . . . and I am not an Evangelical clergyman." By this pregnant sentence we learn that he was restrained from entering the Church by the exhibition of a sickly and narrow form of piety which made the very thought of it offensive. Yet though he thus swerved from that which is justly regarded as the noblest of callings, he has yet lived a consecrated life. The ordination of God has set him apart for the highest service, and he has exercised the priestly office, not in temples made with hands, but in

|| Earth's great cathedral, boundless as our wonder,
Whose quenchless lamps the sun and moon supply,
Its choir the winds and waves, its organ thunder,
Its dome the sky.

At his mother's knee the studious youth received lessons which have remained with him through life.

In his autobiography he tells us how in his early youth his mother *drilled* him in Bible-reading and Bible-study. It was from this fount of power he de-

rived that unquenchable thirst after righteousness which reveals itself in all his works. To this source of inspiration he also owed the richest splendours of his literary style. Take away the influence of the Book of God, and God of Books, from him or from his great contemporary, Thomas Carlyle, and how changed they would appear! How much of beauty and of truth, of dignity and fire, would vanish from the pages of each of these great teachers if they had never communed with Job in the Arabian desert as he pours his solemn thoughts through the gates of magnificent utterance, stood with Israel's lawgiver on Sinai's nodding crest, or listened, all ear, all soul, to the harp of the son of Jesse! Dwelling yet further on the influences which moulded him in early life, Mr. Ruskin tells us that his father annually hired a post-chaise for two months in the summer time, by the help of which he went the round of his country customers; and, as the father took his son with him on these pleasant journeys, he saw "all the high roads, and most of the cross ones, in England and Wales, and great part of Lowland Scotland, as far as Perth." His father also had "a rare love of pictures," and an "innate faculty for the discernment of true art," to which our author attributes the real cause of the bias of his after life. He saw most of the noblemen's homes in England, not, indeed, "at that age caring for the pictures, but much for castles and ruins, feeling more and more, as he grew older, the healthy delight and uncovetous admiration; and perceiving, as soon as he could perceive any political truth at all, that it was probably much happier to live in a small house and have Warwick Castle to be astonished at, than to live in Warwick Castle and have nothing to be astonished at."

In these words we have a fine presentment of Mr. Ruskin's noble philosophy of life, which he holds to consist in simple tastes and simple living, with the

faculties of admiration and wonder kept keenly awake. We also learn how much he owes as a teacher to Thomas Carlyle, who had already said in his "Sartor Resartus," in words which express the central philosophy of that epoch-making book: "Would'st thou rather be a peasant's son who knew, were it never so rudely, that there was a God in heaven and in man, or a duke's son who only knew that there were two-and-thirty quarters in the family coach?"

Besides this record of journeys with his father, and their results in the study of Nature and of Art, Mr. Ruskin has sprinkled over his writings a good many intimations, all deeply interesting, as to his infancy and youth. "The first thing," he writes, "which I remember, as an event in life, was being taken by my nurse to the brow of Friar's Crag on Derwentwater; the intense joy, mingled with awe, that I had in looking through the hollows in the mossy roots, over the crag, into the dark lake, has associated itself more or less with all twining roots of trees ever since." Two other things he remembers as being "in a sort, beginnings of life; crossing Shapfells (being let out of the chaise to run up the hills), and going through Glenfarg, near Kinross, in a winter's morning, when the rocks were hung with icicles." When he came near mountains he had a pleasure, from the earliest time he can recollect until he was eighteen or twenty, "infinitely greater" than he has since found in anything; "comparable for intensity only to the joy of a lover in being near a noble and kind mistress, but no more explicable or definable than that feeling of love itself."

With Wordsworth he might have said:

"I was as sensitive as waters are
To the sky's influence in a kindred mood
Of passion; was obedient as a lute
That waits upon the touches of the wind."

EARLY POEMS.

We are not astonished that through the force of these impressions on his young imagination, Mr. Ruskin soon bloomed into a poet. He prints in "The Queen of the Air," "one of many" of his childish rhymes, "written on a frosty day in Glenfarg, just north of Loch Leven," when he had almost completed his ninth year :

Papa, how pretty those icicles are,
That are seen so near, that are seen so far ;
Those dropping waters that come from the rocks
And many a hole, like the haunt of a fox.
That silvery stream that runs babbling along,
Making a murmuring, dancing song.
Those trees that stand waving upon the rock's-side,
And men that, like spectres, among them glide,
And waterfalls that are heard from far,
And come in sight when very near.
And the water-wheel that turns slowly round,
Grinding the corn that—requires to be ground—
And mountains at a distance seen,
And rivers winding through the plain ;
And quarries with their craggy stones,
And the wind among them moans.

In a small volume of his early poems printed for circulation among his relatives and friends, we have further intimations of Mr. Ruskin's development as a writer. The first of the series, written when he was fourteen, expresses that passion for mountain scenery which constantly appears in the later works of this great master.

I weary for the torrent leaping
From off the scar's rough crest ;
My muse is on the mountain sleeping,
My harp is sunk to rest.

The crags are lone on Coniston,
And Loweswater's dell ;
And dreary on the mighty one,
The cloud-enwreathed Scawfell.

I long to tread the mountain-head
Above the valley swelling ;
I long to feel the breezes sped
From grey and gaunt Helvellyn.

I love the eddying circling sweep,
 The mantling and the foam
 Of murmuring waters dark and deep,
 Amid the valleys lone.

There is a thrill of strange delight
 That passes quivering o'er me,
 When blue hills rise upon the sight
 Like summer clouds before me.

A CHILD OF NATURE.

In these boyish verses we learn how Nature, the mighty mother, was already dominating the life of young Ruskin. Before men or colleges had touched or flawed the mirror of his mind, Nature had received him into her heart, and whispered there her tales of beauty and of grandeur. She baptised her favourite child with the spray of echoing torrents; she anointed him with the silent awe which falls from snowy clefts and shattered precipices; she sublimed him by the influence of the peaks which rise to catch the dawn, or keep the evening with a splendour of regret; and when the appointed hour arrived she called him forth to minister at her altars as the greatest literary delineator of her loveliness and her truth. If we may be forgiven for daring to transpose some magical lines of Wordsworth's, the work of Nature in the dawning soul of Ruskin might not unfitly be described in the following stanzas:

Thus as he grew in sun and shower,
 Kind Nature said "A lovelier flower
 On earth was never sown;
 This child I to myself will take,
 He shall be mine, and I will make
 A writer of my own.

Myself will to my darling be
 Both law and impulse, and with me
 The Youth, in rock and plain,
 In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
 Shall feel an overseeing power
 To kindle or restrain."

Here, then, we have one of the prime factors in the explanation of the genius of Mr. Ruskin. Love for

Nature, insight into Nature, fidelity to Nature—these first passed in early youth into his eager and responsive soul, and to them all his subsequent work as a critic and a teacher may be traced. Hence that radiant sentence from his pen where he says: "In the heavens above and the earth beneath there is one continual and blessed presence of help and peace for all men who know that they live and remember that they die."

Before bidding farewell to Ruskin's early poems we cannot refrain from quoting the following description of a forest glade, which suggests to the student of poetry the delicate beauty of Keats in his "Endymion." The lines certainly show great promise in a youth of only seventeen.

'Twas in the hollow of a forest dim,
Where the low breezes sang their evening hymn,
As in a temple by thick branches aisled,
Whose leaves had many voices, weak or wild;
Their summer voice was like the trooping tread
Of fiery steeds, to meteor battle bred;
Their autumn voice was like the wailing cry
Of a great nation, bowed in misery;
The deep vast silence of the winter's wood
Was like the hush of a dead multitude.
And, in the centre of its summer shade,
Opened a narrow space of velvet glade,
Where sunbeams, through the foliage slanting steep,
Lay, like a smile upon the lips of sleep,
And dew, that thrilled the flowers with full delight,
Fell from the soft eyes of the heaven by night;
And richly there the panting earth put on
A wreathed robe of blossoms wild and wan:
The purple pansies glowed beneath unseen,
Like voiceless thoughts within a mind serene;
The passion'd primrose blessed the morning gale,
And starry lilies shook, in their pavilions pale.

FIRST STUDIES IN ART.

When in his twelfth year, having successfully copied some of Cruikshank's etchings, he was permitted to learn drawing. Two years later he was presented by a friend with Rogers' poem entitled "Italy," and he at once fell in love with the vignettes by Turner, with

which it was illustrated. We are told, indeed, that he was introduced to the banker poet, and that Rogers was not a little chagrined to find that the eager youth with his quick eye for the beautiful knew more about the vignettes than the verses. In 1833 Prout's "Sketches in Flanders and Germany" so charmed the Ruskin family by their quaintness and beauty, that they resolved to see the real things, and to this end they went on a journey up the Rhine, and over the Alps, to Milan and Genoa. The young Ruskin made a book of this tour consisting of poems illumined with vignettes in imitation of Turner's. On the way home he also copied in Paris a Rembrandt, in the Louvre. In the year following, that love of noble architecture, which flamed up in early youth as he looked on the walls of Warwick Castle, rising sheer from the gliding stream beneath, and crowned by tower, and keep, and bastion, received a yet further development by a visit to Abbeville, Rouen, and Rheims. In these ancient towns, there was strengthened within him that admiration, not unmixed with awe, of Gothic architecture, which had been already kindled in the aisles of our own Westminster Abbey, with its groined roof and its pillars stained with the wine of centuries. Hence in the after-time we find the illustrious master of English prose thus describing the style by which he had been so enchanted: "In one point of view Gothic is not only the best, but the *only rational* architecture, as being that which can fit itself most easily to all services, vulgar or noble. Undefined in its slope of roof, height of shaft, breadth of arch, or disposition of ground plan, it can shrink into a turret, expand into a hall, coil into a staircase, or spring into a spire, with undegraded grace and unexhausted energy; and whenever it finds occasion for change in its form or purpose, it submits to it without the slightest sense of loss either to its

unity or majesty,—subtle and flexible like a fiery serpent, but ever attentive to the voice of the charmer.” Other artistic influences also moulded these early years of our great art critic and prose poet, for in 1836 he tried to learn water-colour painting from Copley Fielding, and he also admired in the Academy the striking creations of the magician Turner, and undertook to defend them against the sneers of Blackwood.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY.

We next find our author, under the guardianship of his watchful and devoted mother, pursuing his quest for truth still further, as a gentleman commoner at Christchurch, Oxford. Here, amidst the poetry of architecture, the sanctities of worship, and the stimulating joy of fellowship with his peers, the sworn child of nature was brought into close touch with human art and human life. A spirit so ardent and so finely receptive must have felt deeply the influence of the stately piles of our great university city—piles reared by men who loved old England with a fervent love, and who expressed, in stately dome, and fretted arch, and soaring pinnacle, their sense of the service they owed to their country and to God. Here, amid many helpful associations,

He heard in stately college fanes
The storm their high-built organs make,
And thunder-music rolling shake
The prophets blazoned on the panes.
He joined in high debate a band
Of youthful friends on mind and art,
And labour and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land.

During his residence at Oxford he still exercised the art of poetry, gaining the Newdegate prize for English verse in 1839. In the later examples of his early poems, written at this time, can be discerned suggestive prophe-

cies of his future power. "This remark," says Mr. Bayne, "applies particularly to descriptive passages on the Alps, which read like pieces of Ruskinian prose finely versified. He looks towards the mountains from Marengo, and lifts up his voice:—

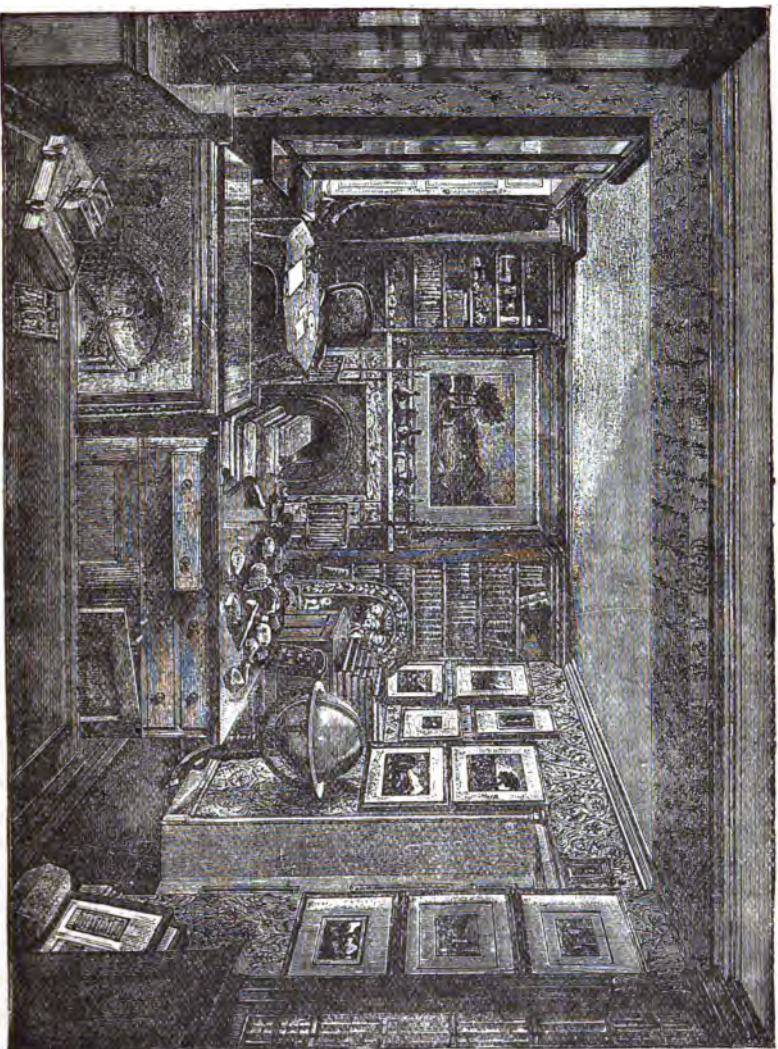
The glory of the cloud—without its wane;
 The stillness of the earth—but not its gloom;
 The loveliness of life—without its pain;
 The peace—but not the hunger—of the tomb!
 Ye pyramids of God! around whose bases
 The sea foams noteless in his narrow cup;
 And the unseen movements of the earth send up
 A murmur which your lulling snow effaces,
 Like the deer's footsteps. Thrones imperishable!
 About whose adamant steps the breath
 Of dying generations vanisheth,
 Less cognisable than clouds; and dynasties,
 Less glorious and more feeble than the array
 Of your frail glaciers, unregarded rise,
 Totter, and vanish.

"Some lines on Mont Blanc, when he revisited it in 1845, have a solemn tenderness, befitting a psalm or hymn.

Oh, mount beloved! mine eyes again
 Behold the twilight's sanguine stain
 Along thy peaks expire;
 Oh, mount beloved! thy frontier waste
 I seek with a religious haste
 And reverent desire.

"Having referred to the worship which God 'wins' from the lowlier creatures, 'the partridge on her purple nest, the marmot in his den,' he cries out in stern lamentation over the contrast to their 'purer praise' afforded by that found upon the lips of men."

From a don's point of view, the career of the young poet, artist and geologist at Oxford was not very successful. He says concerning it—"Of course I never used a crib, but I believe the Dean would rather I had used fifty than borne the puzzled and hopeless aspect which I presented" at some of the examinations. Just, however, as genius and industry were beginning to tell their tale,



MR. RUSKIN'S STUDY.

and his friends expected him to take high honours, he was stricken down by illness, and, being at the last threatened with consumption, was taken away in haste to Italy. This was in the year 1840. Before leaving England, however, he met Turner for the first time. The drawings from the hand of that supreme master, "Richmond Bridge," "Gosport," and "Winchelsea," had already been given him; and with his own money, on coming of age, he bought the "Harlech." Thus early did he bow beneath the spell of the great artist whose works he was soon destined to illustrate and defend. During this visit to Italy his time was given almost entirely to the study of Art amid the creations of its greatest ancient masters, alike in painting, sculpture, and architecture. This study of Art in its native region only deepened his convictions as to the extraordinary merit of the works of Turner. Early in the year 1842, he was able to return to Oxford, and pass his final examination for the degree of Master of Arts. Since that time he has received the distinction of an honorary Oxford studentship, and the degree of LL.D., which was conferred upon him by the University of Cambridge in 1871.

HIS GREATEST BOOK.

The first volume of the work which established his fame as an independent thinker, and a masterly and eloquent writer on Art, was issued in 1843. It was entitled "Modern Painters: their Superiority in the Art of Landscape Painting to all the Ancient Masters Proved, etc., by a Graduate of Oxford." This work was the fruit of the conviction in the mind of the daring young critic that Art did not merely imply a pleasing arrangement of lines and colours, the trick of which was called "composition," but that, in order to be truly great, it must be faithful to Nature. Art, rightly regarded, was

a language, intended to convey to the mind of the gazer the highest ideas of truth, of beauty, and of grandeur. Hence the charm and the power of Turner, whose sketches and paintings were straight impressions from nature, enriched by the glamour of a colour-poet. The book, therefore, should treat of Art in this new light, and should glorify Turner as its great example. The work was produced in five volumes, the last appearing in 1860. As it is practically a defence of Turner's style of painting, it may be well to quote from a lecture delivered in Edinburgh in 1853, the following eulogy of Turner from the lips of Ruskin: "I tell you the truth, which I have given fifteen years of my life to ascertain, that this man, this Turner, of whom you have known so little while he was living among you, will one day take his place beside Shakespeare and Verulam in the annals of the lights of England. Yes; beside Shakespeare and Verulam, a third star in that central constellation, round which, in the astronomy of intellect, all other stars make their circuit. By Shakespeare, humanity was unveiled to you; by Verulam, the principles of nature; and by Turner, her aspect. All these were sent to unlock one of the gates of light, and to unlock it for the first time. But of all the three, though not the greatest, Turner was the most unprecedented in his work. Bacon did what Aristotle had attempted; Shakespeare did perfectly what Æschylus did partially; but none before Turner had lifted the veil from the face of nature; the majesty of the hills and forests had received no interpretation, and the clouds passed unrecorded from the face of the heavens which they adorned, and of the earth to which they ministered." As might be expected from the subject, and from the boldness with which it was treated, the first volume of "Modern Painters" produced a remarkable sensation. Its chief defect arose from the fact that it practically ignored every other artist except

Turner, and that its author had not sufficiently studied the great masters who lived and worked before Raphael. It was splendid in form, but immature in thought. The defects which marred it, however, as an effort of judicious and convincing criticism, were largely, if not entirely, corrected in the succeeding volumes. Before the publication of the second volume, the author was able to compare Turner's colour with that of the great Venetians, and to modify his views concerning the older artists by studying some of the Præ-Raphaelite pictures at Florence. Later on also he was led, through the careful study of the modern artists of the British School, to recognise the fact that there were other names deserving of recognition, and some just meed of praise, besides that of the great landscape and seascape painter, whose genius he chiefly delighted to honour.

MR. RUSKIN'S ART WORK.

No notice of Mr. Ruskin would do him justice which failed to recognise the quantity and the value of his own artistic work. A man may criticise the work of others and yet be totally unable to execute anything of value himself; but Mr. Ruskin in pressing on artists the paramount importance of faithful and observant draughtsmanship, has himself furnished examples of the art of the very finest order. When he bids the artist "to go to Nature in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly, rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing," he only bids him do that which he has done himself. The originals of the engravings in his various books, drawn by his own hand, are marvels of patient and accurate delineation. They form a series of over a hundred and fifty examples, and are triumphs of exquisite and careful workmanship. The best of his etchings are the illustra-

tions to the "Seven Lamps." It is beautiful to notice the loving and patient care with which he follows the effects of time upon a building. Crumbling and worn, and soon destined to fall under the hammer of the destroyer, he seeks in his pages to prolong its beautiful existence, and to endow it with immortality. "As much," says one, "as possible of its history is conveyed to us by the rounding wear of rain, by frost-splitting, by slow crumbling in sun and wind, by stains of creeping vegetation, or nestlings of bolder plants," and with loving and reverent spirit, while faithfully depicting the paths of its ruin, he seeks to arrest it there to live in the printed record when the place which once knew it shall know it no more. It is this value which he attaches to accurate detail, this love of perfect workmanship, and this fear of lowering our conception of the artist's work when he carved the shaft, or raised the pinnacle, for the glory of God, or for the honour of the city of his love, which has made it difficult and almost impossible for him to publish his works at a low price. He has been too fastidious to let them go forth without his own sign-manual of perfection upon them.

LITERARY LABOURS.

For the restless and inquiring intellect in its eager quest of truth there is no finality. Every study is correlated to some further study into which it leads. It holds at its girdle the keys of other palaces of truth which the eager thinker longs to enter and explore. To teach one thing perfectly you need a knowledge of everything. Hence John Ruskin has astonished his readers as much by his versatility as by his eloquence. He has not merely explored the wide area of the arts and sciences, but he has also gone deeply into the questions of humanity, and into the problems involved

in the mystery of our life in this strange and unintelligible world. "The teaching of Art," he says in one place, "is the teaching of everything." In illustration of this statement we have from the pen of this gifted writer, not only the "five wonderful volumes of his greatest work, "Modern Painters," but some fifty other bound volumes, supplemented by a large number of parts and pamphlets. We will only refer our readers to the most important of these, indicating at the same time their purport and their aim. As an episode to "Modern Painters," and out of memoranda which sprung from the preparation of the third volume, Mr. Ruskin threw off in 1849 "The Seven Lamps of Architecture," a book in which he lays down the basis of the successful practice of Art in its relation to morality and religion. "The Stones of Venice," in three volumes, was issued between the years 1851 and 1853. It teaches, on the testimony of architecture, "the dependence of all human work or edifice, for its beauty, on the happy life of the workman." "'Unto this Last,' and 'Munera Pulveris,'" says Grant Allen, "taught the laws of the workman's life, and the dependence of national wealth upon the principles of justice, mercy, and admiration." "Sesame and Lilies," "showed that in a state of society founded on these principles, women will be the guiding and purifying powers." In his "Oxford Lectures," Ruskin preached the necessity that the national life should be led by the upper classes, and "the gracious laws of beauty and labour recognised by them no less than the lower classes of England;" and finally "*Fors Clavigera*" "showed the relation of these to each other by declaring first what is visibly salutary—namely, that children should have enough to eat, and their skins be washed clean; and, secondly, what is invisibly salutary"—namely, that "in admiration is the chief joy and power of life: admiration for all that is gracious among the living,

great among the dead, and marvellous in the powers that cannot die." And with all this there is scattered up and down Ruskin's books, and finally collected and concentrated in "*Fors Clavigera*," an imperious call to all men who believe the Gospel to purge their conscience from dead works, and join together in that of helping their fellow-men.

Thus it will be seen, and we desire our readers to take special note of this, that the final end which Mr. Ruskin has had in view is not art for its own sake, nor science for its own sake, nor political economy for its own sake, nor the praise of beauty simply because it delights us; but all these for the sake of humanity, and for its uplifting and emancipation from all which is degrading. All the work of John Ruskin is essentially Christian, and seems to say in its homage to the great Lover and Redeemer of the race:—

"Let not fine culture, poesy, art, sweet tones
Build up about my soothed sense a world
That is not Thine, and wall me up in dreams,
So my sad heart may cease to beat with Thine,
The great world-heart, whose blood for ever shed
In human life, whose ache is man's dumb pain."

MR. RUSKIN AS A LECTURER.

Besides his work at the desk, Mr. Ruskin has also greatly served his generation as a lecturer on the noblest themes. In the year 1870 he was called from Venice to the chair of the Slade professorship on Art at the Oxford University, a position which he held, with certain breaks caused by illness, until the year 1884. He has also lectured in London, Manchester, and Edinburgh, ever seeking to link his exposition of Art with every department of human life and human necessity. As a lecturer he has been remarkable for his personal magnetism, and for the fine enthusiasm for truth and sanctity which he kindled in the minds of his auditors. A note

from an appreciative listener, Mr. J. H. Friswall, may not be unwelcome here. "Look at him," says this writer, "at the Royal Institute. Leave the country by an early train, dine in London, and then, favoured by a Fellow, present your ticket to Ruskin's lecture. A long, thin, shambling gentleman, like a country clergyman, with hair red, and after the "pound of candles" style in its method of tumbling over his face—a Scotch face, full of shrewdness; very ugly, if we believe some photographs; very winning, bright, and clever—nay, sweet and charming—if we trust to George Richmond's portrait and to reality. The mouth is small, the nose somewhat *retroussé*, the forehead small, but so is the whole face; yet the head is capable, and the fiery soul seems to work upwards and flash out of the windows of those eyes, as the eloquent words, hurried onward in a torrent, flash too, and light up whole tracts of darkness. A word, a hint, a slight reference to some gargoyle or spandril, some carved work in stone, and you see it all. A dry subject becomes luminous; the cold, dead stones of Venice begin to move and raise themselves to life. After hearing Ruskin, you understand how it was that Apollo made the stones dance and form in order to build Troy walls, which you never did before."

THE GUILD OF ST. GEORGE.

A deep anxiety to reduce his social theories to some practical issue, led to the founding by him of the guild or company of St. George. The idea was that the members of the guild should live and labour in the cause of humanity; and, to begin with, should carry out, or at least support, small ventures of home colonisation, acquiring tracts of land in which to realise their ideals of "plain living and high thinking." The appeal for this society made in "*Fors Clavigera*" is as follows: "Will any

such give the tenth of what they have, and of what they earn,—not to emigrate with, but to stay in England with; and do what is in their hands and hearts to make her a happy England?

“I am not rich (as people now estimate riches), and great part of what I have is already engaged in maintaining art-workmen, or for other objects more or less of public utility. The tenth of whatever is left to me, estimated as accurately as I can (you shall see the accounts), I will make over to you in perpetuity, with the best security that English law can give, on Christmas Day of this year, with engagement to add the tithe of whatever I earn afterwards. Who else will help, with little or much? the object of such fund being, to begin, and gradually—no matter how slowly—to increase the buying and securing of land in England, which shall not be built upon, but cultivated by Englishmen, with their own hands, and such help of force as they can find in wind and wave.

“I do not care with how many, or how few, this thing is begun, nor on what inconsiderable scale—if it be but in two or three poor men’s gardens. So much, at least, I can buy myself and give them. If no help come, I have done and said what I could, and there will be an end. If any help come to me, it is to be on the following conditions:—We will try to make some small piece of English ground beautiful, peaceful, and fruitful. We will have no steam-engines upon it, and no railroads. We will have no untended or unthought-of creatures on it; none wretched but the sick; none idle but the dead. We will have no liberty upon it; but instant obedience to known law, and appointed persons. No equality upon it; but recognition of every betterness that we can find, and reprobation of every worseness.”

A beginning was actually made, a few plots of ground given by supporters, or bought by Ruskin himself, being

tilled by hand labour, as the nucleus of a larger purpose. A museum was also established at Walkley, near Sheffield, as the centre of the guild's educational work. This museum contains the choicest Art treasures of its founder, and if his power had only been equal to his will, the scheme would ere now have reached important development. But Mr. Ruskin, never very robust, was struck down in the spring of 1878 by brain fever, resulting from the enormous pressure of work which he had undertaken. Because of this illness he was obliged to slacken his efforts, as well as to give up "*Fors*" and his Oxford professorship; and recurrent attacks of the same nature have practically confined him to his home at Brantwood. In the unhappily rare intervals when his health permits, he continues to write and publish his autobiography, under the title of "*Præterita*."

PERSONAL TRAITS.

Mr. Ruskin is, in the finest sense of that much-abused word, a "gentleman"—a man of fine sensibilities and generous impulses, penetrated through and through with the spirit of tenderness and self-sacrifice. Children love him, and all who have shared his hospitality have been charmed with his delicate attentions and his anxiety to minister to their happiness. A few incidents from his life may indicate better than any long array of words his spirit and temper. While staying in Edinburgh in 1853 he attended St. John's Free Church, and heard Dr. Guthrie preach. That eloquent and large-hearted Scotchman was deeply gratified one day by receiving the three volumes of his "*Stones of Venice*" from their distinguished author. The accompanying note was as follows:

"*Saturday, 26th, 1853.*

"I found a little difficulty in writing the words on

the first page, wondering whether you would think the 'affectionate' misused or insincere. But I made up my mind at last to write what I felt—believing that you must be accustomed to people's getting very seriously and truly attached to you, almost at first sight, and therefore would believe me.

"You asked me, the other evening, some kind questions about my father. He was an Edinburgh boy, and in answer to some account by me of the pleasure I had had in hearing you, and in the privilege of knowing you, as also of your exertions in the cause of the Edinburgh poor, he desires to send you the enclosed—to be applied by you in such manner as you may think fittest for the good of his native city. I have added slightly to my father's trust. I wish I could have done so more largely, but my profession of fault-finding with the world in general is not a lucrative one.—

"Always respectfully and affectionately yours,

"J. RUSKIN."

MR. RUSKIN AND A CAPUCHIN FRIAR.

The following incident from his own pen is very interesting where he says: "Last summer in Rome I lodged at the Hôtel de Russe; and, in the archway of the courtyard of that mansion, waited usually, in the mornings, a Capuchin friar, begging for his monastery. Now, though I greatly object to any clergyman's coming and taking me by the throat and saying, 'Pay me that thou owest,' I never pass a begging friar without giving him sixpence, or the equivalent fivepence of foreign coin, extending the charity even occasionally as far as tenpence, if no fivepenny-bit chance to be in my purse. And this particular begging friar having a gentle face, and a long white beard, and a beautiful cloak, like a blanket, and being altogether the pleasantest sight, next

to Sandro Botticelli's Zipporah, I was like to see in Rome in the course of the day, I always gave him the extra fivepence for looking so nice; which generosity so worked on his mind—the more usual English religious sentiment in Rome expending itself rather in buying poetical pictures of monks than in filling their bellies—that, after some six or seven doles of tenpences, he must needs take my hand one day and try to kiss it. Which being only just able to prevent, I took him round the neck and kissed his lips instead: and this, it seems, was more to him than the tenpences, for, next day, he brought me a little reliquary, with a certificated fibre in it of St. Francis' cloak (the hair one, now preserved at Assisi); and when afterwards I showed my friend, Fra Antonio, the Assisi sacristan, what I had got, it was a pleasure to see him open his eyes. He thought I must have come by it dishonestly; but not I, a whit—for I most carefully explained to the Capuchin, when he brought it me, that I was more a Turk than a Catholic; but he said I might keep the reliquary, for all that."

MR. RUSKIN AND "GREAT THOUGHTS."

Since much capital has been made by Mr. Ruskin's detractors of his unwillingness to issue his works in a cheap form, when the reluctance only arose from his exacting canons of taste with regard to printing and style, we are glad to make known the following example of his literary generosity. In the December of 1883, when the present writer was contemplating the publication of "Great Thoughts" as a new literary venture, he wrote to Mr. Ruskin explaining his purpose, and asking permission to use extracts from his writings. He further explained that as the treasures of Mr. Ruskin's genius were practically inaccessible to the masses, the columns of "Great Thoughts" would help to make them

MR. RUSKIN AND "GREAT THOUGHTS." 25

known to many who could not share them in any other way. He received in reply the following letter:

Brinkley,

Cornwall, Devonshire.

30th Dec. 83

Sir

I am very glad to hear of a minister's editing such a periodical as you propose: but I am not sanguine of its success - Do you think you really can sift a pennyworth of thoughts a week? Anyhow if minds here and there will serve you are very welcome to them

Faithfully Yours

W. R. Rusk

Mr. Rev. Robt P. Davies.

FILIAL PIETY.

In this age of spoilt children and obedient parents, when reverence is at a discount, and the sacredness and unquestioned authority of fatherhood and motherhood seem sadly on the wane—when the father is chiefly respected as the holder of the purse, and to be tied to a mother's apron-strings is deemed the climax of weakness—it is refreshing to meet with one who can say in earnest truth what John Ruskin has said: "*I never disobeyed my mother.*" Very beautiful is this filial piety which finds its root in a pure and noble life, and there has been no more conspicuous example of it than the greatest Art critic and prose poet of the age. In April, 1876, Mr. Ruskin finished the restoration of a spring of water between Croydon and Epsom, by erecting a tablet over it. About £500 was spent upon it altogether, converting what was a dirty pond into a clear pool of running water, fed from the springs below the chalk. The inscription is as follows:

"In obedience to the Giver of Life, of the brooks and fruits that feed it, of the peace that ends it, may this well be kept sacred for the service of men, flocks, and flowers, and by kindness called Margaret's Well. This pool was beautified and endowed by John Ruskin, Esq., M.A., LL.D."

The pool is situated by the highway, and is surrounded by trees and flowers. The dedication is a beautiful tribute to his mother, whose Christian name was Margaret.

In the little churchyard at Shirley, also, not far from the residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, there is a ponderous gravestone, bearing the following characteristic inscriptions:

"Here rests, from day's well-sustained burden, John Thos. Ruskin, born in Edinburgh, May 10, 1785. He died in his home in London, March 3, 1854. He

was an entirely honest merchant, and his memory is, to all who keep it, dear and helpful. His son, whom he loved to the uttermost, and taught to speak truth, says this of him.

"Here, beside my father's body, I have laid my mother's. Nor was dearer earth ever returned to earth, nor purer life recorded in heaven. She died December 5, 1861, aged 90."

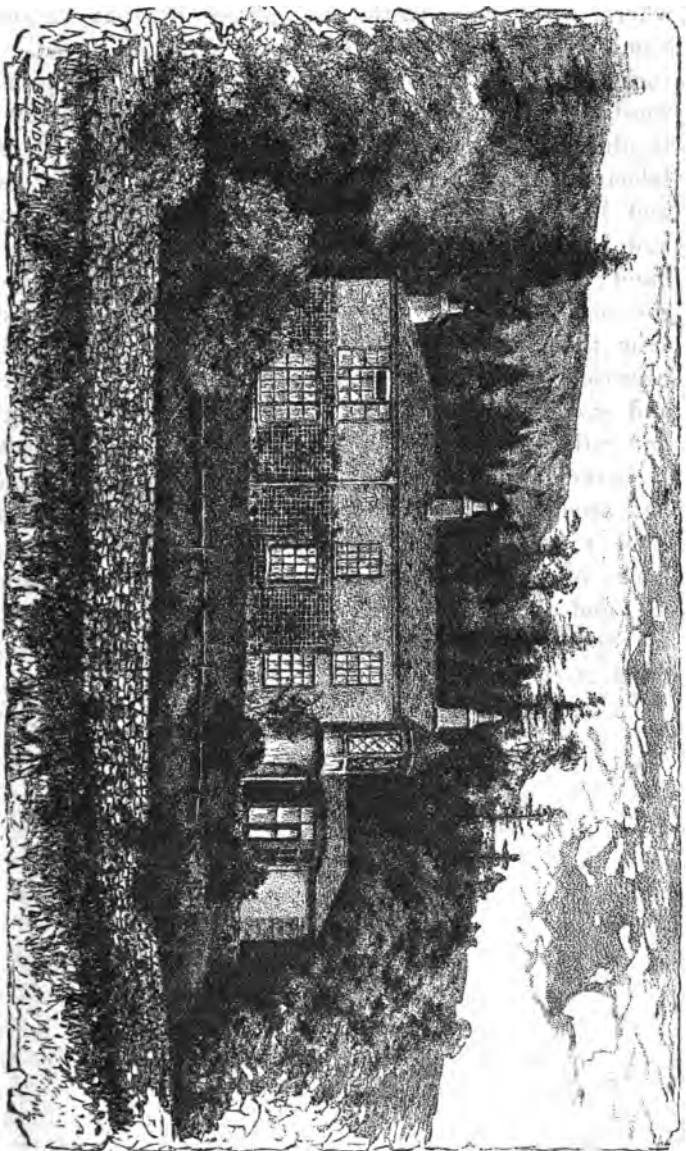
In March, 1878, Mr. Ruskin was prostrated by a severe illness consequent upon his labours preparatory to an exhibition of his Turner drawings in New Bond Street. The introduction to his illustrative notes contains the following pathetic passage, full of the bitter-sweet of memory, as it recalled the loved ones who had vanished: "Morning breaks as I write along those Coniston Fells, and the level mists, motionless and grey beneath the rose of the moorlands, veil the lower woods, and the sleeping village, and the long lawns by the lake shore. Oh, that some one had but told me, in my youth, when all my heart seemed to be set on those colours and clouds that appear for a little while and then vanish away, how little my love of them would serve me, when the silence of lawn and wood in the dews of morning should be completed, and all my thoughts should be of those whom, by neither, I was to meet more."

In the same spirit are penned the following exquisite words, which our readers will do well to ponder: "Let us not forget that if honour be for the dead, gratitude can only be for the living. He who has once stood beside the grave, to look back upon the companionship which has been for ever closed, feeling how impotent, *there*, are the wild love and the keen sorrow, to give one instant's pleasure to the pulseless heart, or atone in the lowest measure to the departed spirit for the hour of unkindness, will scarcely for the future incur that debt to the heart, which can only be discharged to the dust."

MR. RUSKIN'S HOME.

"Ruskin's home," writes W. G. Collingwood, "has often been described—a country cottage amplified into something like a mansion, on the steep lake shore, over against the highest summit of our Lancashire Alps, the bare and rocky Coniston Fells. Before sunrise every morning he writes by candle-light, getting through the most serious part of his work undisturbed until the late family breakfast. Letter-writing generally occupies the rest of his working day—that is, till half-past four, with a short interval of wood-chopping before luncheon—and it is not till the afternoon has far advanced that he is free to go out for a visit or an excursion, or up on the moor behind the house to oversee and take a hand in the draining and planting operations by which he has put in practice his ideas as to the reclamation of waste lands. After a seven o'clock dinner he reads aloud in the drawing room—Scott's novels by preference—or perhaps translating French at sight with wonderful ease and felicity; plays a game of chess; hears a little music, sometimes of his own composition; and not long after ten retires to a little bed in a little room, surrounded by the Turner drawings whose names have been household words for the last half-century to the readers of 'Modern Painters.'"

With regard to the moral character of Ruskin nothing needs to be said. For long years he has moved in our midst "wearing the white flower of a blameless life," and we are in a position to affirm, on the authority of some who have known him intimately during the whole of his career, that every incident in his record, however marked by singularity, as judged from a conventional standpoint, has been consistent with the most stainless honour. He has had his enemies and detractors, in common with most men who battle for the true and just in a world



"BRANTWOOD," JOHN RUSKIN'S HOUSE IN THE LAKE DISTRICT.

where, with many, truth and justice are but an empty name or a mark for the shafts of hate and scorn. But such spirits we will dismiss in his own daring but noble words, where he says: "Because I have passed my life in almsgiving, not in fortune-hunting; because I have laboured always for the honour of others, not my own; and have chosen rather to make men look to Turner and Luini, than to form or exhibit the skill of my own hand; because I have lowered my rents and assured the comfortable lives of my poor tenants, instead of taking from them all I could force for the roofs they needed; because I love a wood walk better than a London street, and would rather watch a sea-gull fly than shoot it, and rather hear a thrush sing than eat it; finally, because I never disobeyed my mother, and because I have honoured all women with solemn worship, and have been kind to the unthankful and the evil; therefore, the hacks of English art and literature wag their heads at me, and the poor wretch who pawns the dirty linen of his soul daily for a bottle of sour wine and a cigar talks of the effeminate sentimentality of Ruskin."

CHAPTER II.

THE TEACHING OF JOHN RUSKIN.

Let ——— “Prophets of nature, we to them will speak
A lasting inspiration, sanctified
By reason, blest by faith: what we have loved
Others will love, and we will teach them how;
Instruct them how the mind of man becomes
A thousand times more beautiful than the earth
On which he dwells, above this ‘frame of things.’”

WORDSWORTH.

HAVING dwelt in the former part of our sketch with the life and published works of “the Sage of Coniston;” we will now consider in fuller detail some of the more salient features of his “teaching.” In so doing we shall seek to obtrude our own personality as little as possible, and to let the “master” witness for himself. Before, however, proceeding to the themes of which he treats, we must first call attention to *the wondrous flow, and melody, and majesty of his style*. Language is pliant to his touch, being ever attentive to the voice of the charmer; and he wields a vocabulary so rich that it is suited to all the purposes of thought. For descriptive power he stands head and shoulders above all his contemporaries. In reading his stately prose we experience

“a kind of inward feast,
A harmony that sounds within the breast,
An odour, light, embrace, in which the soul doth rest.”

Were Nature to break into words—were the blue sky to speak, we often feel that it might find utterance in some of the lovely sentences of Ruskin. The most glorious conceptions are not too high for his reach and compass, and the most delicate distinctions are not too subtle. Sometimes we feel in the rush of his overwhelming sentences, as if we heard the thunder pealing from heaven's clouded palaces, and anon it is as though a flower had grown musical to tell its secret.

"Now 'tis like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute."

Language in his grasp is a web of texture fine and frail enough to catch the gentlest winds of thought, or it is a wire on which leap and blaze the lightnings of the soul. Now it descends upon us like a lark coming wavering down from the blue lift to his mate in the meadow grass, and now, like that of the eagle, its flight is far, and it fears not famine, neither is it dazzled by the meridian blaze. And all the while the spirit of the prophet is obedient to the prophet: there is no unmeaning redundancy—no idle waste of words. If any one doubts this, let them attempt to alter or transpose one of Ruskin's descriptive passages, and they will find it impossible to change a word without darkening the sense. Nothing is wild, meaningless, or uncertain; but, on the contrary, "all is stern collectedness and Art."

The question has been asked by some critics as to whether there is really such a thing as prose-poetry. But without question there are prose-poets as surely as there are poets who have expressed their thoughts in the ordered and rhythmic melody of verse. If Ruskin were not a poet, how could he have "said or sung" the following Hymn to the Bride of the Adriatic? It is prose only in form, and scarcely in that, and the

appreciative soul can easily weave it into the finest poetry.

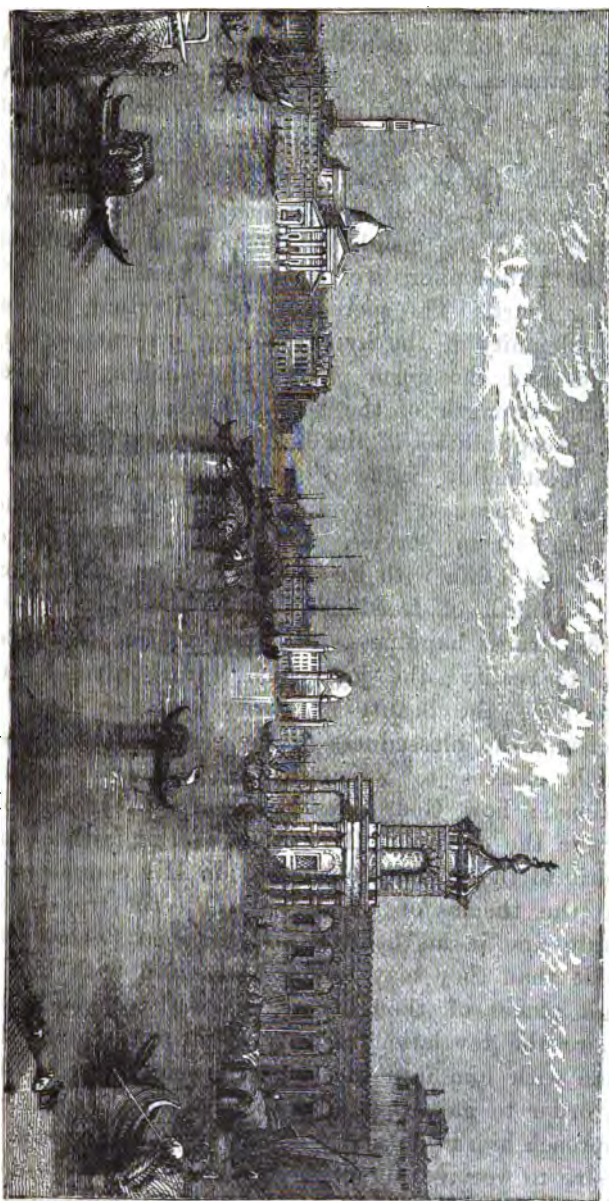
"A city of marble, did I say? nay, rather a golden city, paved with emerald. For truly, every pinnacle and turret glanced or glowed, overlaid with gold or bossed with jasper. Beneath, the unsullied sea drew in deep breathing, to and fro, its eddies of green wave. Deep-hearted, majestic, terrible as the sea,—the men of Venice moved in sway of power and war; pure as her pillars of alabaster, stood her mothers and maidens; from foot to brow, all noble, walked her knights; the low bronzed gleaming of sea-rusted armour shot angrily under their blood-red mantle folds. Fearless, faithful, patient, impenetrable, implacable,—every word a fate,—sate her senate. In hope and honour, lulled by flowing of wave around their isles of sacred sand, each with his name written and the cross graved at his side, lay her dead. A wonderful piece of world. Rather, itself a world. It lay along the face of the waters, no larger, as its captains saw it from their masts at evening, than a bar of sunset that could not pass away; but, for its power, it must have seemed to them as if they were sailing in the expanse of heaven, and this a great planet, whose orient edge widened through ether. A world from which all ignoble care and petty thoughts were banished, with all the common and poor elements of life. No foulness nor tumult, in those tremulous streets, that filled, or fell, beneath the moon; but rippled music of majestic change, or thrilling silence. No weak walls could rise above them; no low-roofed cottage, nor straw-built shed. Only the strength as of rock, and the finished setting of stones most precious. And around them, far as the eye could reach, still the soft moving of stainless waters, proudly pure; as not the flower, so neither the thorn nor the thistle, could grow in the glancing fields. Ethereal strength of Alps,

dream-like, vanishing in high procession beyond the Torcellan shore; blue islands of Paduan hills, poised in the golden west. Above, free winds and fiery clouds ranging at their will; brightness out of the north, and balm from the south, and the stars of the evening and morning clear in the limitless light of arched heaven and circling sea."

And now, in turning to consider the teaching of Ruskin, how wide is the domain which lies before us! Not only has he flung open for our entrance the palace doors of Nature—not only do we visit in his company

"the slippery verge,
Where snow in terror falls; which eagles touch
Half trembling, half in triumph; where the light
Seems flurried in its passage, and the mist
Creeps shuddering."

but there is scarcely anything of truly human interest which he has not touched, and everything which he has touched he has adorned, shedding on it "that light which never was on sea or shore, the consecration and the poet's dream." There can be no question among thoughtful men that we have in Mr. Ruskin not only a prose poet of matchless eloquence, but one of the finest teachers of this century. It is in this light that he has been regarded by some of the first thinkers of the age. "Do you look out," wrote George Eliot to her friend Miss Sara Hennell, "for Ruskin's books whenever they appear? I venerate him as one of the greatest teachers of the age. He teaches with the inspiration of a Hebrew prophet." And to Emerson, Carlyle said, "Do you read Ruskin's '*Fors Clavigera*'? If you don't, do; I advise you. Also, whatever else he is now writing. There is nothing going on among us so notable to me." These estimates are amply justified by the thoughtful consideration of his works: they furnish to-day no small part of our richer literary treasures. And, despite his hatred of



VENICE.
(From a Painting by J. M. W. TURNER, R.A.)

shams and the scorn with which he lashes all deceit and all meanness, he is so tender and compassionate withal, carrying into the varied subjects which he treats the spirit of the pitying Saviour of the world. His works are richly tintured with the blood of his own inmost life; he speaks to us not *professionally* but *humanly*, and ever beneath the insight of the poet, and the penetration of the philosopher, we trace the beating of a great, loving heart. The sacredness of individual, human life; the solemnity of the living, acting, present as the foundation and the germ of the far-reaching future; the passing strength of the body; the powers of the mind; the susceptibilities of the heart; the sanctity of the will; the inestimable value of honest work, however lowly or even mean it may appear; the inseparableness of privilege from service, and the identification of the blessings of life with its duties; the glory of freedom, and the strength of freedom's battle; the cheapness of the purest, truest happiness; the fixed relation of art to truth and to reality; the joy which Nature gives to all who love her; the beauty of purity and the shame of the unclean; the blessedness of the righteous, and the curse which cleaves to wrong-doing, whether individual or national; how God gives His grace to the humble, His love to the obedient, His favour to the faithful and His Spirit to those who seek it and do His commands: these are the themes of which John Ruskin treats, nor did Dante find in his beloved and glorified Beatrice a purer guide than they may follow who stand with him on the high places of thought, or, having reached the place where the revelation of the infinite transcends thought, gaze with him into the immeasurable deeps of heaven. In order to gain the full benefit of his wisdom, we must approach him in no spirit of cavilling, but with a zealous desire to receive all we can from one who speaks to us with the certainty and fearlessness of ripened wisdom,

and who is gifted for our benefit with clearer and fuller insight than we can boast. We must not take offence at anything which we find opposed to our own preconceived ideas. We must not reject the counsel of our guide because he is sometimes not consistent with himself, but rather respect the wisdom which is glad to recant former errors, and which rejoices that it sees further to-day than it did on all its yesterdays. Rather we should say to ourselves: "We will not suffer such a man as this to go from us unheard, unheeded, to add one more to the number of those of whom the world was not worthy. We will rather embrace his teaching with gratitude that so great a teacher has been sent amongst us—one who proclaims certainty where before was haunting suspicion, "and settled doubt, whose inspired gaze can penetrate, as his eloquence opens up, the causes and fountains of all the light and beauty which radiate and glow alike in the moral and the material universe." Such an attitude as this with regard to John Ruskin will be our profoundest wisdom, for there are few really great teachers ever found with us, and when they *are* found we should be swift to pay them homage. For our part, we often think that we discern in Ruskin much which was best in the teaching alike of Socrates, of Plato, and of Goëthe; that he combines in a striking degree the questioning power of the first, with the ideal beauty of the second, and the wide and luminous view and scientific accuracy of the third. Sir John Lubbock was asked on one occasion whether Ruskin or Goëthe had done most for science. He replied that Ruskin undoubtedly had done very much more valuable work than Goëthe; and that, without any pretensions to profound scientific knowledge, he had an extraordinary natural gift for observation, and seemed to know by instinct *what* to observe, what was important amidst so much that was fanciful and poetical; and

he then went on to quote the description of the swallow, from "Love's Meinie," one of the loveliest things imaginable, and which it would not be difficult to apply to Ruskin's own genius—so swift, so unerring in its flights, so incalculable, so harmonious and fascinating always.

In order to attain clearness and definiteness, and that none may fail to follow us, we will include our survey of Mr. Ruskin's teaching under the following heads:—Nature Teaching; Art Teaching; Teaching concerning Humanity; Social and Philanthropic Teaching; and Religious Teaching.

I.—NATURE TEACHING.

Only the other day we met with a beautiful thought in one of George Macdonald's books. The book is written in the form of an autobiography, and in one place the writer says: "I passed a house out of which came a young woman leading a little boy. They came after me, the boy gazing at the red and gold and green of the sunset sky. As they passed me the child said, 'Auntie, I think I should like to be a painter.' 'Why?' returned his companion. 'Because, then,' answered the child, 'I could help God to paint the sky.' What his aunt replied I do not know, for they were presently beyond my hearing. But was the child's aspiration in vain? Could I tell him God did not want his help to paint the sky? True, he could mount no scaffold against the infinite of the glowing west. But might he not with his little palette and brush, when the time came, show his brothers and sisters what he had seen there, and make them see it too? Might he not thus come, after long trying, to help God to paint this glory of vapour and light inside the minds of His children?" This little parable does not unfitly express the work which John Ruskin has accomplished for us. He has not touched

the heavens with his pencil, but he has so touched our minds that we see in them more than we saw before. We seem to have had grander sunsets, and richer breakings of the dawn, and sublimer mountains flinging themselves in wild and passionate profusion along the sky, and finer clouds planting the pillars of their silver palaces on the horizon's verge, since Ruskin wrote. Nothing has really changed. The glories have been there since Moses climbed the peaks of Sinai to meet with God, or the Chaldean shepherds looked from their level plains upon the solemn stars, or Chaucer revelled in the dewy freshness of an English spring-time, or Shakespeare looked upon the daffodils which come before the swallow dares, and take the winds of March with beauty. Yet our vision has been so clarified that familiar things are transfigured before us, and are fraught with richer meanings than we had previously discerned. As never before realised, we now seem

"to have
Attentive and believing faculties.
To go abroad rejoicing in the joy
Of beautiful and well-created things;
To love the voice of waters, and the sheen
Of silver fountains leaping to the sea;
To thrill with the rich melody of birds
Living their life of music, to be glad
In the gay sunshine, reverent in the storm;
To see a beauty in the stirring leaf,
And find calm thoughts beneath the whispering tree,
To see, and hear, and breathe the evidence
Of God's deep wisdom in the natural world."

At the word of this royal guide the gates of the "Palace Beautiful" of Nature are lifted up, and we are privileged to enter in and see all which we take with us the power to see. It does not matter whether he describes the petals of a rose, or the chasms of a precipice. Love and admiration ever attend him, and the visible scene is carried far into our hearts. He takes us where the *pine trees* rise "on the inaccessible juts and perilous

ledges of the mountain—upright, fixed, spectral, as troops of ghosts standing on the walls of Hades.” He leads us where *the lichens and the mosses* “veil with hushed softness the dintless rocks, and cover with strange and tender honour the scarred disgrace of ruin. Strong in loveliness, they neither blanch in heat nor pine in frost. To them, slow-fingered, constant-hearted, is entrusted the weaving of the dark, eternal tapestries of the hills; to them, slow-pencilled, iris-dyed, the tender framing of their endless imagery. Sharing the stillness of the unimpassioned rock, they share also its endurance; and while the winds of departing spring scatter the white hawthorn blossom like drifted snow, and summer dims on the parched meadow the drooping of its cowslip-gold, far above, among the mountains, the silver lichen-spots rest, star-like, on the stone; and the gathering orange-stain upon the edge of yonder western peak reflects the sunsets of a thousand years.”

He calls us from the heated chamber to look at *the crest of the Alp*, from the far-away plains over which its light is cast. “The child looks up to it in the dawn, and the husbandman in the burden and heat of the day, and the old man in the going down of the sun, and it is to them all as the celestial city on the world’s horizon; dyed with the depth of heaven, and clothed with the calm of eternity. There was it set, for holy dominion, by Him who marked for the sun his journey, and bade the moon know her going down.” He bids us watch, until our senses creep, that “*ghost of a cloud*, which steals by yonder clump of pines; nay, which does *not* steal by them, but haunts them, wreathing yet round them, and yet—and yet, slowly: now falling in a fair waved line, like a woman’s veil; now fading, now gone: we look away for an instant, and look back, and it is again there. What has it to do with that clump of pines, that it broods by them and weaves itself among



ALPINE SPLENDOURS.

their branches, to and fro? Has it hidden a cloudy treasure among the moss at their roots, which it watches thus? Or has some strong enchanter charmed it into fond returning, or bound it fast within those bars of bough? Or *those war-clouds* that gather on the horizon, dragon-crested, tongued with fire—how is their barbed strength bridled? what bits are these they are champing with their vaporous lips; flinging off flakes of black foam? Leagued leviathans of the Sea of Heaven, out of their nostrils goeth smoke, and their eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. The sword of him that layeth at them cannot hold the spear, the dart, or the habergeon. Where ride the captains of their armies? Where are set the measures of their march? Fierce murmurs, answering each other from morning until evening—what rebuke is this which has awed them into peace? what hand has reined them back by the way by which they came?"

At his command we scan with a feeling not untouched by awe the *Alpine precipices*, "dark in colour, robed with everlasting mourning, for ever tottering like a great fortress shaken by war, fearful as much in their weakness as in their strength, and yet gathered after every fall into darker frowns and unhumiliated threatening; for ever incapable of comfort or of healing from herd or flower, nourishing no root in their crevices, touched by no hue of life on buttress or ledge, but, to the utmost, desolate: knowing no shaking of leaves in the wind, nor of grass beside the stream,—no motion but their own mortal shivering, the deathful crumbling of atom from atom in their corrupting stones; knowing no sound of living voice or living tread, cheered neither by the kid's bleat nor the marmot's cry; hunted only by uninterpreted echoes from far off, wandering hither and thither among their walls, unable to escape, and by the hiss of angry torrents, and sometimes the shriek of

a bird that flits near the face of them, and sweeps frightened back from under their shadow into the gulf of air: and, sometimes, when the echo has faded, and the wind has carried the sound of the torrent away, and the bird has vanished, and the mouldering stones are still for a little time—a brown moth, opening and shutting its wings upon a grain of dust, may be the only thing that moves, or feels, in all the waste of weary precipice, darkening five thousand feet of the blue depth of heaven.”

Much more might be given from the pen of this great master as he leads us forth in other places to behold the “pride of purple rocks, and river pools of blue, and tender wildness of glittering trees, and misty lights of evening on immeasurable hills,” but enough has been given to demonstrate that we cannot walk with John Ruskin without gaining a new insight into the beauty and the grandeur of Nature as the handiwork of God. And he unveils and interprets for us this beauty, and this grandeur, that he may charm us into the reverent study of outward things. Nor can we be said to be in any true sense educated if we have neglected the love which comes from bird, and stream, and tree, and from the mountain cathedrals with “their gates of rock, pavements of cloud, choirs of stream and stone, altars of snow, and vaults of purple traversed by the continual stars.” The real object of education is not the cramming of the mind with a never-ending curriculum of the sciences, so-called, but the perfecting of the peculiar powers with which each man is endowed. And we are poor indeed if the result of all our toil in schools and colleges is only the skill to pull a flower to pieces and name its parts, while we have lost the power to appreciate its loveliness as it blooms before us in field or garden. Surely the teachings of dawn and sunset, of waving tree and whirling river, are as solemn

and as fruitful as any to be derived from other sources. What will it suffice us if we have studied dead languages and dissected birds and rabbits, and left these alone? So that to us, "the heirs of all the ages," the mountain side may have its wondrous line, and the vault of heaven be filled with ever-changing wreaths of cloud, and the forest may bow and swing its bossy cones and domes of foliage, but our eyes are uninstructed to appreciate the loveliness around us, and our souls respond not to its divine meanings. With what wise and noble scorn does Ruskin rebuke such folly when writing in *'Fors'* of a lovely district which we have desecrated, he says: "You think it a great triumph to make the sun draw brown landscapes for you. That was also a discovery, and some day may be useful. But the sun had drawn landscapes before for you, not in brown, but in green, and blue, and all imaginable colours, here in England. Not one of you ever looked at them then; not one of you cares for the loss of them now, when you have shut the sun out with smoke, so that he can draw nothing more, except brown blots through a hole in a box. There was a rocky valley between Buxton and Bakewell, once upon a time, divine as the Vale of Tempe; you might have seen the Gods there morning and evening—Apollo and all the sweet Muses of the Light—walking in fair procession on the lawns of it, and to and fro among the pinnacles of its crags. You cared neither for Gods nor grass, but for cash (which you did not know the way to get); you thought you could get it by what the *Times* calls 'Railroad Enterprise.' You Enterprised a Railroad through the valley—you blasted its rocks away, heaped thousands of tons of shale into its lovely stream. The valley is gone, and the Gods with it; and now, every fool in Buxton can be at Bakewell in half an hour, and every fool in Bakewell at Buxton; which you

think a lucrative process of exchange—you Fools Everywhere.”

We cannot refrain from quoting in this connection a telling passage from the “New Republic,” by Mallock, in which he makes Ruskin say: “Do not think that I complain of this generation because it studies Nature; I complain of it because it does not study her. Yes, you can analyse her in your best tubes, you can spy at her through your microscopes, but can you see her with your own eyes, or receive her into your own souls? You can tell us what she makes her wonders of, and how she makes them, and how long she takes about it; but you cannot tell us what these wonders are like when they are made. When God said ‘Let there be light,’ &c., was He thinking of the exact velocity it travelled at when He saw that it was good, or how it clothed the wings of the morning with silver and the feathers of evening with yellow gold? Is water a nobler thing to a modern chemist, who can tell you what gases it is made up of and nothing more; or to Turner, who could not tell you at all what it is made of, but who did know and could tell you what it is made—what it is made by the sunshine, and the cloud-shadow, and the storm-wind,—who knew how it paused in the taintless mountain trout-pool, a living crystal, over stones of flickering amber; and how it broke itself turbid, with its choirs of turbulent thunder, when the rocks churn it into foam, and where the tempest sifts it into spray. Each generation is wise in its own wisdom, and ours would sooner look at a foetus in a bottle than at a statue of the god Apollo, from the hand of Phidias, and in the air of Athens.”

SCIENTIFIC ACCURACY.

It may be wise to show further that Ruskin has ushered us into the world of Nature not only with the

ardour of a lover and the insight of a seer, but also with the skill and accuracy of a scientist. In proof of this, take the following passage on "The Air":—

"The deep of air that surrounds the earth enters into union with the earth at its surface, and with its waters; so as to be the apparent cause of their ascending into life. First, it warms them and shades at once, staying the heat of the sun's rays in its own body, but warding their force with its clouds. It warms and cools at once, with traffic of balm and frost, so that the white wreaths are withdrawn from the field of the Swiss peasant by the glow of the Lybian rock.

"It gives its own strength to the sea, forms and fills every cell of its foam, sustains the precipices, and designs the valleys of its waves; gives the gleam to their moving under the night, and the white fire to their plains under sunrise; lifts their voices along the rocks, bears above them the spray of birds, pencils through them the dimpling of unfooted sands. It gathers out of them a portion in the hollow of its hand; dyes with that the hills into dark blue, and their glaciers with dying rose; inlays with that, for sapphire, the dome in which it has to set the cloud, shapes out of that the heavenly flocks—divides them, numbers, cherishes, bears them on its bosom, calls them to their journeys, waits by their rest, feeds from them the brooks that cease not, and strews with them the dews that cease. It spins and weaves their fleece into wild tapestry, rends it, and renews; and flits, and flames, and whispers among the golden threads, thrilling them with a plectrum of strange fire that traverses them to and fro, and is enclosed in them like life.

"It enters into the surface of the earth, subdues it, and falls together with it into fruitful dust, from which can be moulded flesh; it joins itself in dew to the substance of adamant, and becomes the green leaf out of the dry

ground; it enters into the separated shape of the earth it has tempered, commands the ebb and flow of the current of their life, fills their limbs with its own lightness, measures their existence by its indwelling pulse, moulds upon their lips the words by which one soul can be known to another, is to them the hearing of the ear, and the beating of the heart; and, passing away, leaves them to the peace that hears and moves no more."

And now, in concluding this part of our survey of Mr. Ruskin's teaching, let us thankfully acknowledge our indebtedness to him for the way in which he has increased our capital of pure and ennobling pleasures by opening up for us new fields of delight in the varied spectacle of Nature. Whoever has read his works will thereafter approach the visible universe with a new faculty of appreciation, will have his attention directed to what he before regarded with indifference, will discover what was before hidden, and will not fail to rise by creation's golden ladder to the throne and dwelling-place of Him "of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things." And what a boon is this for mortal man to confer upon his fellows!—a boon which is only fully realised by those who have drunk deeply at those fountains of delight and wonder which Nature opens to the receptive and obedient spirit. The world knows well how to cheat her votaries with fancied satisfaction and unreal happiness; but, to quote the fine lines of Coleridge:

"With other ministrations, thou, O Nature,
Healest thy wandering and distempered child;
Thou pourest on him thy soft influences,
Thy sunny hues, fair forms, and breathing sweets,
Thy melodies of woods, and winds, and waters,
Till he relent, and can no more endure
To be a jarring and a dissonant thing
Amid the general dance and minstrelsy;
But, bursting into tears, wins back his way,
His angry spirit healed and harmonised
By the benignant touch of love and beauty."

What this influence has been to the man whom we delight to honour, we find set forth in an "epilogue," dated Chamouni, Sunday, September 16th, 1888, with which he concludes the final and complete edition of his "Modern Painters," as follows:

"And now in writing beneath the cloudless peace of the snows of Chamouni, what must be the really final words of the book which their beauty inspired and their strength guided, I am able, with yet happier and calmer heart than heretofore, to enforce its simplest assurance of Faith, that the knowledge of what is beautiful leads on, and is the first step, to the knowledge of the things which are lovely and of good report; and that the laws, the life, and the joy of beauty in the material world of God, are as eternal and sacred parts of His creation as in the world of spirits virtue; and in the world of angels, praise."

II.—ART TEACHING.

"In all true works of Art, if thou know a work of Art from a daub of Artifice, wilt thou discern Eternity looking through Time; the God-like rendered visible."—CARLYLE.

This pregnant sentence, from the man to whose teachings he is so much indebted, contains in the germ Mr. Ruskin's Gospel of Art, as preached in that greatest of his works, "Modern Painters." There are eternal and immutable laws of beauty, to which the Creator Himself adheres in His work, and which can never be departed from by any human workman with impunity. True Art is attained by obedience to these laws, and by a patient and reverent study of God's work. Beauty does not consist merely in the true, for "the mirage of the desert is fairer than its sands." Neither does it find its essence in the useful, or spades and millstones might claim its crown. According to Ruskin, beauty is "the expression of the Creating Spirit of the universe;" it is

the smile which irradiates the face of God, and which ripples up through all created things in smaller or in larger measure in proportion as they are framed to embody and to express it. And beauty shines through the universe in order that, as the poet Spenser expresses it, men may

lift themselves higher.
And learn to love with zealous humble duty
Th' eternal fountaine of that heavenly beauty.

What is Art? From what instinct in man does it spring? To what faculties does it appeal? By what rules is it to be judged? What purpose does it serve? The Ruskinian Gospel answers these fundamental questions with no uncertain sound. "The Art of man,"—such is the first article of faith as defined in "The Laws of Fésolé,"—"is the expression of his rational and disciplined delight in the forms and laws of the creation of which he forms a part." Ruskin's theory of the origin of Art is thus the old theory of imitation, with a "rider;" Art arises out of imitation, but of imitation touched with delight. Both are necessary. Thus "a lamb at play, rejoicing in its own life only, is not an artist." But the child who looking at the lamb, and liking it, tries to imitate it on his slate, is an artist. This is the theory which all Ruskin's historical studies in Art serve to illustrate. "All Great Art is praise." The perfection of Greek Art was the expression of their delight in God's noblest work—the disciplined beauty of the human body. The perfection of early Italian Art was its delight in "saints a-praising God." It is with Architecture as with Painting; those fair fronts of mouldering wall were filled with sculpture of the saints whom the Cathedral Builders worshipped and of the flowers they loved. Such being on the Ruskinian theory the origin of Art, it is easy to see to what faculties in man it appeals. "Like is known of like"; from delight

in the forms and laws of God's creation Art comes, to that delight it appeals. This is the central idea of the chief book of Ruskin's Gospel. "In the main aim and principle of 'Modern Painters,'" he says, "there is no variation from its first syllable to its last. It declares the perfectness and eternal beauty of the work of God; and tests all work of man by concurrence with or subjection to that."

Great Art disimprisons the Divine in Nature, and interprets it *through* the human intellect to the human soul. The beauty and the music are there, and the penetrating genius of the artist calls them forth and gives them human expression, for human delight and uplifting.

THE ARTIST'S VOCATION.

"Art, properly so called," says our author, "is no recreation; it cannot be learned at spare moments, nor pursued when we have nothing better to do. It is no handiwork for drawing-room tables, no relief of the ennui of boudoirs; it must be understood and undertaken seriously, or not at all. To advance it men's lives must be given, and to receive it their hearts." And thus the artist's vocation is an important one, and his ministry of the highest value. There are some who have been inclined to charge Art with frivolity, and to regard the artist as one who cannot be said to take life seriously, or to be really of any importance as a factor in the State. But Ruskin's view of the artist's vocation is directly opposed to any such conception as this. On the contrary he gives to noble Art a high place in the rank of service, and shows in the most convincing way that the sum of the qualities necessary in the greatest Art is simply the sum of all the best powers of man: "For," he says, "as the choice of the highest

subjects involves all the conditions of right moral choice, as the love of beauty involves all the conditions of right admiration, as the grasp of truth involves all strength of sense and evenness of judgment, and as the poetical power involves all swiftness of invention, and accuracy of historical memory, the sum of all these powers is the sum of the human soul."

It is the office of Art in its noblest forms to be the intermediiator between man and Nature; or, rather, is to reveal to man the Divine spirit in Nature. The great artist is he who can perceive most fully this Divine spirit which pervades the world, and who has the power of producing adequately the revelation thus made to him, and of enabling other and denser souls to discern this heaven-born light, and to rejoice in it. To this great critic, Nature is pervaded with the Divine spirit, and there is no evil in her. She appears evil only where man has debased and polluted her. Now the function of the artist is to reveal this Divine element in things around us, and he will best fulfil it by studying Nature simply, earnestly, and truthfully. He will succeed in the proportion in which he reproduces adequately what he sees. He must not cast the dark "shadow of himself and his personality over her"; he must not attempt to "improve upon her," but, he must present her simply as she is, for "Nature," in Ruskin's words, "is an unconquerable and excellent glory, leaving nothing more to be by fancy pictured or pursued."

CHARACTERISTICS OF GREAT ART.

In one place Ruskin gives us a specific description of the characters which make up greatness of style. Accordingly he states them to be in the order of their increasing importance: 1st, the habitual and sincere choice of noble subjects; 2nd, the introduction of as

much beauty as is consistent with truth ; 3rd, the largest possible quantity of truth in the greatest possible harmony ; and 4th, imaginative power.

"Great Art dwells," he says, "on all in Nature that is beautiful ; but false Art omits or changes all that is ugly. Great Art accepts Nature as she is, but directs the eyes and thoughts to what is most perfect in her ; false Art saves itself the trouble of direction by removing or altering whatever it thinks objectionable ; the evil results of which proceeding are twofold.

"First. That beauty deprived of its proper foils and adjuncts ceases to be enjoyed as beauty, just as light deprived of all shadow ceases to be enjoyed as light. A white canvas cannot produce an effect of sunshine ; the painter must darken it in some places before he can make it look luminous in others ; nor can an uninterrupted succession of beauty produce the true effect of beauty ; it must be foiled by inferiority before its own power can be developed. Nature has for the most part mingled her inferior and noble elements as she mingles sunshine with shade, giving due use and influence to both, and the painter who chooses to remove the shadow perishes in the burning desert he has created. The truly high and beautiful art of Angelico is continually refreshed and strengthened by his frank portraiture of the most ordinary features of his brother monks, and of the recorded peculiarities of ungainly sanctity ; but the modern German and Raphaelesque schools lose all honour and nobleness in barber-like admiration of handsome faces, and have, in fact, no real faith except in straight noses and curled hair. Paul Veronese opposes the dwarf to the soldier, and the negress to the queen ; Shakespeare places Caliban beside Miranda, and Autolycus beside Perdita ; but the vulgar idealist withdraws his beauty to the safety of the saloon, and his innocence to the seclusion of the cloister. He pretends that he does

this in delicacy of choice and purity of sentiment, while in truth he has neither courage to front the monster, nor wit enough to furnish the knave. . . . High Art, therefore, consists neither in altering, nor in improving Nature; but in seeking throughout Nature for 'whatsoever things are lovely, and whatsoever things are pure'; in loving these, in displaying to the utmost of the painter's power such loveliness as is in them, and directing the thoughts of others to them by winning art, or gentle emphasis."

COUNSEL TO THE ARTIST.

From this criticism the transition is natural to the following exquisite words of counsel given by Mr. Ruskin to the artist:

"Whatever you do, don't be anxious, nor fill your head with little chagrins and little desires. Keep yourself quiet, peaceful, with your eyes open. It doesn't matter at all what Mr. So-and-so thinks of you or your work, but it does matter a great deal what that bird is doing up there in its nest, or how that vagabond child at the street corner is managing his game of knuckle-down. And remember, you cannot turn aside from your own interests, to the bird's and the children's interests, unless you have long before got into the habit of loving and watching birds and children; so that it all comes at last to the forgetting yourselves, and the living out of yourselves, in the calm of the great world; or, if you will, in its agitation, but always in a calm of your own bringing. Do not think it wasted time to submit to any influence which may bring upon you any noble feeling. Rise early, always watch the sunrise, and the way the clouds break before the dawn. . . . Live always in the spring time in the country: you do not know what leaf-form means, unless you have seen the

buds burst, and the young leaves breathing low in the sunshine, and' wondering at the first shower of rain. But, above all, accustom yourselves to look for and to love all nobleness of gesture and of feature in the human form; and remember that the highest nobleness is usually among the aged, the poor, and the infirm; you will find in the end that it is not the strong arm of the soldier, nor the laugh of the young beauty, that are the best studies for you. . . . You will love the creatures to whom you minister, your fellow-men; for if you do not love them, not only will you be little interested in the passing events of life, but in all your gazing at humanity you will be apt to be struck only by outside form, and not by expression. It is only kindness and tenderness which will ever enable you to see what beauty there is in the dark eyes that are sunk with weeping, and in the paleness of those fixed faces which the world's adversity has compassed about, till they shine in their patience like dying watchfires through twilight."

This same lesson of the love of Nature and fidelity to Nature, as the true methods of artistic culture, is continually repeated by Mr. Ruskin. He constantly affirms that there never was a great picture which was not painted out of a sense of solemn joy in communion with nature, or a serene yet intense sympathy with human life—its gladnesses and its sorrows. And as men cease to be true to Nature their Art decays. The Greeks had lost their healthy delight in Nature, as God's work, before their marbles declined into dead lives; and the Italians had abandoned themselves to all excesses of licence before their pictures became, in the period of the Medicis, a scandal and a shame. They became a nation of copyists only, having ceased to go forth into God's world to study His message written on soaring pinnacle and fretted cloud.

Here, in a passage of great beauty, he shows that

when noble work was to be done in Florence in the rearing of that famous tower which is one of its chiefest glories, Giotto, the architect, had to be called from the wilderness for the work: "I said that the power of human mind had its growth in the wilderness; much more must the love and conception of that beauty, whose every line and hue we have seen to be, at the best, a faded image of God's daily work and an arrested ray of some star of creation, be given chiefly in the places which he has gladdened by planting there the fir-tree and the pine. Not within the walls of Florence, but among the far-away fields of her lilies, was the child trained who was to raise that headstone of Beauty above her towers of watch and war. Remember all that he became; count the sacred thoughts with which he filled the heart of Italy; ask those who followed him what they learned at his feet; and when you have numbered his labours and received their testimony, if it seemed to you that God had verily poured out upon His servant no common nor restrained portion of His Spirit, and that he was indeed a king among the children of men, remember also that the legend upon his crown was that of David—'I took thee from the sheepcote and from following the sheep.'"

RUSKIN AND THE PRE-RAPHAELITES.

About half a century ago a few young painters, the foremost of whom were John Everett Millais, Holman Hunt, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, deeply influenced by Mr. Ruskin's teaching in the early volumes of "Modern Painters," rebelled against the conventional routine of Academic teaching, and banded together to study Nature as it appeared to them, and not as it appeared to Raphael, or to other leading painters of the fifteenth century. In their admiration for the purity of feeling

and fidelity of aim of the painters who had preceded and led up to Raphael, they chose the title of "Pre-Raphaelites." They boldly affirmed that the followers of Raphael had ruined the art of painting, simply because they were followers of Raphael, and not humble students of Nature. Three other eminent painters—E. Burne Jones, Sir Noel Paton, and Ford Madox Brown—belong in spirit to the same school, though they were never actually members of the pre-Raphaelite brotherhood.

Pages might be filled with extracts from intolerant reviews against what was termed the audacity and conceit of the youthful innovators who had dared to express an opinion and to advocate a method opposed to the conventional routine, but the young enthusiasts were undoubtedly right as to the main issue of the controversy, and in 1851 Mr. Ruskin came to their support. He freely expressed his approval in letters to the *Times*, and in a subsequent pamphlet on pre-Raphaelitism. His defence and explanations were renewed in his "Lectures on Architecture and Painting," published in 1853, where, in reply to a virulent critic, who denounced "Woe, woe, woe! to exceedingly young men of stubborn instincts, calling themselves pre-Raphaelites," he exclaims, "I thank God that the pre-Raphaelites *are* young, and that strength is still with them, and life, with all the war of it, still in front of them. Italy, in her great period, knew her great men, and did not 'despise their youth.' It is reserved for England to insult the strength of her noblest children—to wither their warm enthusiasm early into the bitterness of patient battle, and leave to those, whom she should have cherished and aided, no hope but in resolution, no refuge but in disdain." Thus we owe to John Ruskin much of the choicest painting of the present time. He it was who led back its finer spirits to the study of Nature, and the walls of the Royal Academy owe most of what is really precious upon them to the influence and the writings of this great art critic.

ARCHITECTURE.

The beneficent power which Ruskin has wielded in the realm of painting is not less marked if we turn to the sphere of Architecture. He beautifully teaches that it is the function of Architecture to remind the dwellers in cities of Nature as the handiwork of God. Hence he writes: "We are forced, for the sake of accumulating our power and knowledge, to live in cities; but such advantage as we have in association with each other is in great part counterbalanced by our loss of fellowship with Nature. We cannot all have our gardens now, nor our pleasant fields to meditate in at eventide. Then the function of our architecture is, as far as may be, to replace these; to tell us about Nature; to possess us with memories of her quietness; to be solemn and full of tenderness, like her, and rich in portraiture of her; full of delicate imagery of the flowers we can no more gather, and of the living creatures now far away from us in their own solitude." Writing again of the subjects suitable for architectural ornament, he says: "From visions of angels down to the least important gesture of a child at play, whatever may be conceived of Divine, or beheld of Human, may be dared or adopted by you; throughout the kingdom of animal life, no creature is so vast, or so minute, that you cannot deal with it, or bring it into service; the lion and the crocodile will couch about your shafts; the moth and the bee will sun themselves upon your flowers; for you, the fawn will leap; for you, the snail be slow; for you, the dove smooth her bosom; and the hawk spread her wings towards the south. All the wide world of vegetation blooms and bends for you; all leaves tremble that you may bid them be still under the marble snow; the thorn and the thistle, which the earth casts forth as evil, are to you the kindest servants; no dying petal, nor drooping tendril is so feeble as to have

no help for you; no robed pride of blossom so kingly but it will lay aside its purple to receive at your hands the pale immortality. Is there anything in common life too mean—in common things too trivial—to be ennobled by your touch?" It is this free use of the fair things of Nature which makes Gothic architecture the noblest of all. "Hence," says Mr. Ruskin, speaking in its praise: "the Goths ransacked all Nature for the hop, the clover, the rose, and the mallow; they stole curves from the waves and the hills, and put every wood and meadow under tribute, making all the flowers in unfading stone adorn the temple of the God who made them."

THE LAWS OF ARCHITECTURE.

From the consideration of the function of Architecture Mr. Ruskin turns by a natural transition to the laws by which the worker should be guided in the prosecution of his task. Writing on this subject he says: "In the main we require from buildings, as from men, two kinds of goodness: first the doing their practical duty well, then that they be graceful and pleasing in doing it; which last is another form of duty.

"Then the practical duty divides itself into two branches—acting and talking: acting, as to defend us from weather or violence; talking, as the duty of monuments or tombs to record facts and express feelings; or of churches, temples, public edifices treated as books of history to tell such history clearly and forcibly.

"We have thus altogether three great branches of architectural virtue, and we require of any building:

"1. That it act well and do the things that it was intended to do in the best way.

"2. That it speak well, and say the things it was intended to say in the best words.

"3. That it look well and please us by its presence, whatever it has to do or say."

These laws are further enforced in that magnificent book, "The Seven Lamps of Architecture," which, if there were no other creation of his genius, would alone entitle him to universal admiration. The "Seven Lamps" here kindled, and hung aloft for the guidance of students and workers in the realm of architecture, are "Sacrifice," "Truth," "Power," "Beauty," "Life," "Memory," and "Obedience." In working out these ideas Mr. Ruskin lays down with splendid enthusiasm the basis of the successful practice of art in its relation to religion and morality. He shows with all the power of one who sees deep into the heart of things, and who is able to unfold and enforce their finer relations how all true Art must be conceived and carried out in the spirit of fidelity to Nature, and of unfaltering reverence for the laws of God.

ST. MARK'S, VENICE.

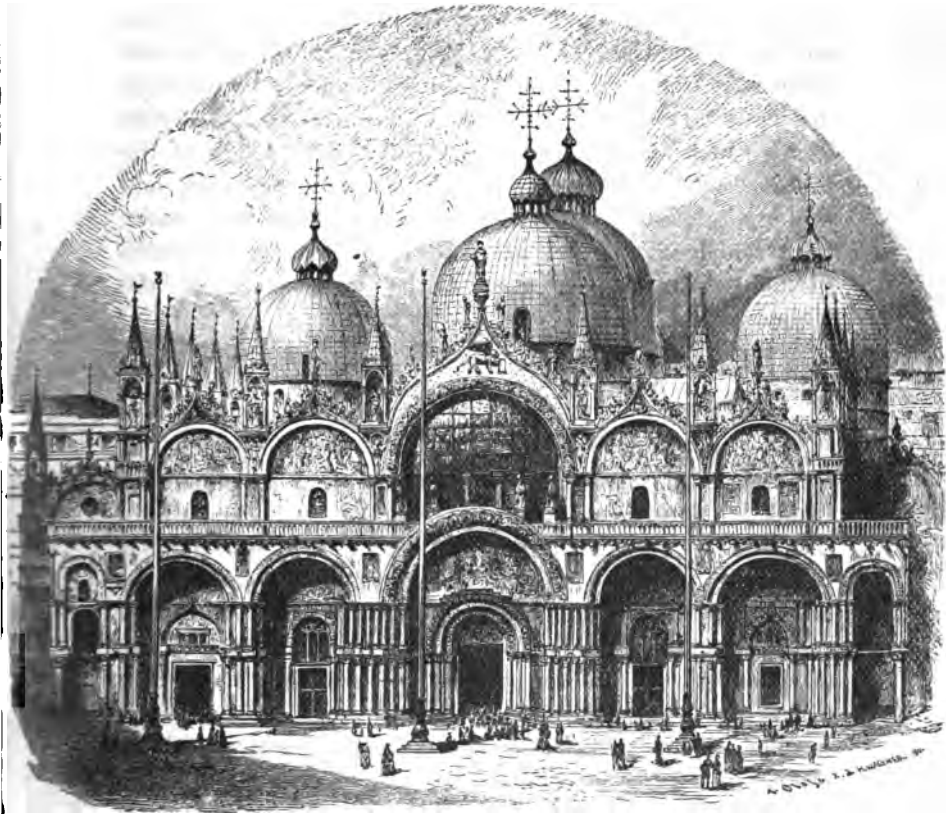
As a specimen of profound art criticism, there is perhaps nothing finer in any literature than Mr. Ruskin's account and justification of the style and character of St. Mark's, Venice. "Before the publication of Mr. Ruskin's 'Stones of Venice,'" says a critic in the *North British Review*, "St. Mark's was a stumblingblock and a mystery to all persons, architects or amateurs, who beheld it. It violates the laws of all admitted schools of architecture, just as Shakespeare's plays violate all preceding dramatic rules. It is now proved clearly to constitute, as Shakespeare's dramas do, an art by itself, with laws no less severe than those of other schools, but perfectly independent of them; and Mr. Ruskin's great criticism of this great work of art, not only teaches us to feel that work—for we moderns are too far gone in

criticism to be able to feel what we cannot in some measure understand—but it reveals to us certain hitherto unknown laws of art which may henceforth be applied, not only to the explication of still anomalous works, but to the development of similar beauty.

“Mr. Ruskin begins by observing that the Venetian architects were at a great distance from any available quarries of stone, and that their materials were brought to them in vessels of small burthen, propelled by oars, rather than sails. The cost of carriage was, of course, the same, whether the load was of freestone or jasper, it was therefore natural to choose a costly material where the carriage was in any case highly paid. This consideration, coupled with the recollection that the Venetians had been accustomed, in their old country, to build much with fine marbles, the remains of ancient edifices gives some clue to their adoption of marble as their building material. Having once made this selection, it follows that the buildings were of necessity comparatively small. Setting cost aside, it is impossible to procure blocks of marble above a certain size. It is also natural that the builders should be glad to save carriage, by getting, where it was possible, columns ready sculptured.

“The architect of Venice had then to build of precious blocks of coloured marbles, and shafts and capitals ready sculptured, taken from foreign buildings. It remained for him either to place his blocks of marble here and there (for it was impossible that the whole edifice should be marble), and to fashion his sculptures anew, or to split his marble, and use it as a mere surface covering to his walls, and adopt such a style of architecture as would admit his foreign sculptures where their beauty might be seen, and still allow of their admixture with new ornamentation. The architect of St. Mark’s caring more for beauty, though existing in

the works of others, than his own fame, and seeking by every means to embellish his building, chose the latter alternative. And this style, adopted at first partly



ST. MARK'S, VENICE.

from necessity, and partly from old association, became dear to the Venetians, and it was customary in their times of prosperity to spoil conquered nations of their

marbles, and to crowd the front of their cathedral, not only with these, but with offerings of miscellaneous wealth." Thus by the observation and reflection of our great art critic, the character of the architecture of St. Mark's is explained and justified. In glowing and sympathetic language the story of its fair colours is told, and we learn the wisdom of the men to whom we owe those fair fronts of variegated mosaic, charged with their instructive imagery; those vaulted gates, trellised with leaves which seem almost to tremble at the touch of the breezes which sweep the waters of the Adriatic, and those window-labyrinths of twisted tracery and starry light which gleam beneath the misty masses of multitudinous pinnacle set against the deep azure of the Italian sky.

ART AND THE POOR.

We feel that we cannot conclude our notice of Ruskin as an Art critic without quoting a passage in which he nobly shows that art fails in its high ministry if it has for its foundation and for its end nothing but the pride of life—the pride of the so-called superior classes; a pride which supported itself by violence and robbery, and led in the end to the destruction both of the arts themselves, and the States in which they flourished. "The great lesson of history is," says this splendid teacher, "that all the fine arts hitherto—having been supported by the selfish power of the noblesse, and never having extended their range to the comfort or the relief of the mass of the people—the arts, I say, thus practised and thus matured, have only accelerated the ruin of the States they adorned; and at the moment when, in any kingdom, you point to the triumphs of its greatest artists, you point also to the determined hour of the kingdom's decline. The names of great painters are like

passing bells; in the name of Velasquez you hear sounded the fall of Spain; in the name of Titian, that of Venice; in the name of Leonardo, that of Milan; in the name of Raphael, that of Rome. And there is profound justice in this; for in proportion to the nobleness of the power is the guilt of its use for purposes vain or vile; and hitherto the greater the art, the more surely has it been used, and used solely for the decoration of pride, or the provoking of sensuality. Another course lies open to us. We may abandon the hope—or if you like the words better—we may disdain the temptation, of the pomp and grace of Italy in her youth. For us there can be no more the throne of marble—for us no more the vault of gold—but for us there is the loftier and lovelier privilege of bringing the power and charm of art within the reach of the humble and the poor; and as the magnificence of past ages failed by its narrowness and its pride, ours may prevail and continue, by its universality and its lowliness." It is words such as these which invest the writings of John Ruskin with an undying charm. We are glad that the most eloquent voice of the present century is thus raised to claim for the toiling masses their right to the treasures of genius which are so lavishly poured forth for the benefit of the race. That is a poor glory which shines only for the vision of the privileged few. Not thus does the Divine Artist deal with men when he draws the curtains for the breaking dawn, and kindles the fires of sunset. Not for the rich only does the Spring unfold her loveliness, or Summer paint the meadows with delight, or Autumn toss her mellow ripeness in the golden air. The sea-psalm is chanted not only for kings and princes seated at their gilded casements, but for all who wander on its whispering marge; and when night reveals her pomp of stars scattered like dust upon God's temple floor, the wearied eyes of the worker looking through his dim

window may survey the glory, *and there is nothing to pay.* That city too, whose gates are pearl and its foundations jasper, stands open day and night for the entrance of the sad and weary of every land and clime, through Him who dwelt among lowly men and placed in the hands of a Galilean fisherman the keys of His palace home. Thus does our noble teacher as he pleads for a beauty which the poor may share, stand side by side with God and tenderness sanctifies his strength as the snow-flake beautifies Mont Blanc.

III.—TEACHING CONCERNING HUMANITY.

"I must, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil;
Not chaos, darkest pit of Erebus,
Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scoop'd out
By help of dreams, can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon us often when we look
Into our minds, into the mind of man."

WORDSWORTH.

Eloquent as Ruskin is when he treats of the streams, the woodlands, and the mountains, opening gates of loveliness which else had never rolled back for us upon their golden hinges, and valuable as he is as a critic in Art, and a witness of its beauty and its ministry, we love him most when he turns aside from these things to look on man; standing forth, to use his own words, as "the crowning and ruling work of God." For after all the material universe, in all its bewildering vastness, is only the creation of God, and is not like Him, while man is His image and His child. It is idle to talk of the glory of the visible creation, and to argue therefrom the nothingness of man. The material universe is, after all, but a great and glorious clod, and man is greater than it, as the tenant is greater than the house in which he dwells.

Looking within and without, and soaring in fancy

amidst the blue and starry altitudes which rise and spread above him, man may yet cry :

Even here I feel,
Among these mighty things, that as I am
I am akin to God; that I am part
Of the use universal, and can grasp
Some portion of that reason in the which
The whole is ruled, and founded: that I have
A spirit nobler in its cause and end,
Lovlier in order, greater in its powers
Than all these bright and swift immensities.

In perfect harmony with these impressive lines is Ruskin's conception of man as "the roof and crown of things." Hence referring with noble scorn to that modern science which has declared "there is no such thing as man, but only a transitional form of Ascidians and apes," he further says: "It may or may not be true—it is not of the smallest consequence whether it be or not. The real fact is, that, seen with human eyes, there is nothing else but man; that all animals and beings beside him are only made that they may change into him; that the world truly exists only in the presence of Man, acts only in the passion of Man. The essence of Light is in his eyes—the centre of Force in his soul—the pertinence of Action in his deeds." To him, as to most truly great thinkers, man is the *nexus* or link which carries creation back to the Being who sent it forth. He is the medium by which Nature climbs up into a soul which can love, and trust, and worship. He is the world's self-surveying eye, the world's self-hearing ear, the world's self-announcing voice, and Nature finds her relation to him her finest significance. Take her away from him and she is voiceless, lonely, pitiless, terrible. This is finely illustrated in a criticism by Ruskin of one of Turner's pictures. In the "Pass of Faido," the painter introduces a postchaise in the foreground. He was criticised for so doing on the

ground that he thereby destroyed the majesty of desolation in his picture. Not so, says Ruskin, he enhanced it. "The full essence and soul of the scene and consummation of all the wonderfulness of the torrents and Alps lay in that postchaise." And why? Because, without the suggestion of the human element, Nature loses in the instant its power over the human heart. Our author has further illustrated this point in a famous passage in the "Seven Lamps," descriptive of a scene in the Jura:

"It would be difficult to conceive one less dependent upon any other interest than that of its own secluded and serious beauty; but the writer well remembers the sudden blankness and chill which were cast upon it when we endeavoured, in order more strictly to arrive at the sources of its impressiveness, to imagine it, for a moment a scene in some aboriginal forest of the New Continent. The flowers in an instant lost their light, the river its music; the hills became oppressively desolate; a heaviness in the boughs of the darkened forest showed how much of their former power had been dependent upon a life which was not theirs, how much of the glory of the imperishable, or continually renewed, creation is reflected from things more precious in their memories than it, in its renewing. Those ever-springing flowers and ever-flowing streams had been dyed by the deep colours of human endurance, valour, and virtue, and the crests of the sable hills that rose against the evening sky received a deeper worship, because their far shadows fell eastward over the iron wall of Joux and the four-square keep of Granson."

Here is another fundamental article in the Gospel according to Ruskin. It is the function of Art, as we have seen, to declare the beauty of God; but man's soul is the mirror of God's, and hence all the power of Nature depends on its subjection to the human soul.

"Man," says our author, "is the sun of the world; more than the real sun. The fire of his wonderful heart is the only light and heat worth guage or measure. Where he is are the tropics; where he is not, the ice-world." And in another place, referring to Nature and to human life, he says: "No scene is continually and untiringly loved, but one rich by joyful human labour; smooth in field; fair in garden; full in orchard; trim, sweet, and frequent in homestead; ringing with voices of vivid existence. No air is sweet that is silent; it is only sweet when filled with low currents of under-sound, triplets of birds, and murmur and chirp of insects, and deep-toned words of men, and wayward trebles of childhood."

MAN THE IMAGE OF GOD.

A still grander tribute to the essential greatness of man is that wonderful passage in which Mr. Ruskin comments on the declaration of Scripture that, "God made man in His own image," and proceeds to show in the light of this truth that it is in man we must look for a revelation of God adequate for our necessities, since despite the fact of its defilement, the soul of man is still a mirror, wherein may be seen, though darkly, the image of the mind of God. "Here is a short piece," he says, "of precious word-revelation, for instance, 'God is love.'"

"Love! yes. But what is *that*? The revelation does not tell you that, I think. Look into the mirror, and you will see. Out of your own heart you may know what love is. In no other possible way—by no other help or sign. All the words and sounds ever uttered, all the revelations of cloud, or flame, or crystal, are utterly powerless. They cannot tell you, in the smallest point, what love means. Only the broken mirror can.

"Here is more revelation. 'God is just!' Just!

What is that? The revelation cannot help you to discover. You say it is dealing equitably or equally. But how do you discern the equality? Not by inequality of mind; not by a mind incapable of weighing, judging, or distributing. If the lengths seem unequal in the broken mirror, for you they are unequal; but if they seem equal, then the mirror is true. So far as you recognise equality, and your conscience tells you what is just, so far your mind is the image of God's: and so far as you do *not* discern this nature of justice or equality, the words 'God is just' bring no revelation to you.

"'But His thoughts are not as our thoughts.' No; the sea is as the standing pool by the wayside. Yet when the breeze crisps the pool, you may see the image of the breakers, and a likeness of the foam. Nay, in some sort, the same foam. If the sea is for ever invisible to you, something you may learn of it from the pool. Nothing, assuredly, any otherwise.

"'But this poor miserable Me! Is *this*, then, all the book I have got to read about God in?' Yes, truly so. No other book, nor fragment of book, than that, will you ever find; no velvet-bound missal, nor frank-incensed manuscript; nothing hieroglyphic nor cuneiform; papyrus and pyramid are alike silent on this matter; nothing in the clouds above, nor in the earth beneath. That flesh-bound volume is the only revelation that is, that was, or that can be. In that is the image of God painted; in that is the law of God written; in that is the promise of God revealed. Know thyself; for through thyself only thou canst know God.

"Through the glass, darkly. But, except through the glass, in nowise.

"A tremulous crystal, waved as water, poured out upon the ground—you may defile it, despise it, pollute it at your pleasure, and at your peril; for on the peace

of those weak waves must all the heaven you shall ever gain be first seen; and through such purity as you can win for those dark waves, must all the light of the risen Sun of righteousness be bent down, by faint refraction. Cleanse them, and calm them, as you love your life."

HUMAN DUTY.

If we turn from the consideration of the dignity of man to his duty, Mr. Ruskin tells us: "Man's use and function are, to be the witness of the glory of God, and to advance that glory, by his reasonable obedience and resultant happiness. People speak in this working age, when they speak from their hearts, as though houses and lands, and food and raiment, were alone useful, and as if sight thought, and admiration were all profitless . . . Men's business in this world falls, mainly into three divisions:

"1. To know themselves, and the existing state of things with which they have to do.

"2. To be happy in themselves and the existing state of things, so far as either are marred or mendable.

"3. To mend themselves and the existing state of things, so far as either are marred or mendable.'

He proceeds to point out that for these, "man has substituted the choice of a total ignorance, a state of unhappiness, and a determination to leave things alone." Now this should not be, but man should fulfil the purpose of the Creator in giving him life by obeying the laws which result in happiness, and he should also labour for the realisation of his best ideals, and for the betterment of the world around him. As to the fitting *education* for the duties of life, Mr. Ruskin asserts the necessity for national government schools. "There should be training schools for youth established, at government cost, and under government discipline, over the whole

country; that every child born in the country should, at the parent's wish, be permitted (and, in certain cases, be under penalty, required) to pass through them; and that, in these schools, the child should (with other minor pieces of knowledge hereafter to be considered) imperatively be taught, with the best skill of teaching that the country could produce, the following three things:

“(a) The laws of health, and the exercises enjoined by them;

“(b) Habits of gentleness and justice; and

“(c) The calling by which he is to live.”

But Mr. Ruskin further pleads for real education and not for the mere shadow of it which teaches children only how to read, or to cipher, or to repeat words of which they know not the true meaning. What he desires is that children should be “taught to be clean, active, honest, and useful. Public schools in which the aim was to form character faithfully, would return the children in due time to their parents, worth more than their weight in gold.”

In another place he demands that *the love of the beautiful* should be cultivated in early life, beauty being one of the divinely appointed elements by which the human soul is refined and ennobled. In regard to this he says:

“All education to beauty is, first, in the beauty of gentle human faces round a child; secondly, in the fields—fields meaning grass, water, beasts, flowers and sky. Without these no man can be educated humanly. He may be made a calculating machine, a walking dictionary, a painter of dead bodies, a twangler or scratcher on keys or catgut, a discoverer of new forms of worms in mud; but a properly so-called human being—never.”

As to the question of *human occupations* after educa-

tion has done its work, he enforces in the first place the necessity of labour *for all*. He takes great pains to insist on the fact that "God intends no man to exist in this world without work." For this reason the working-classes should be highly esteemed, and we should abandon our mode of counting our labourers as so many "hands," but regard them as so many "souls," as did the patriarchs. As to the *professions*, our teacher gives us the following summary saying in "Unto this Last": "Five great intellectual professions, relating to daily necessities of life have hitherto existed—three exist necessarily, in every civilised nation:

"The soldier's profession is to *defend* it.

"The pastor's, to *teach* it.

"The physician's, to *keep it in health*.

"The lawyer's to *enforce justice* in it.

"The merchant's, to *provide* for it."

"And the duty of all these men is, on due occasion, to *die* for it.

"On due occasion, namely:

"The soldier, rather than leave his post in battle.

"The physician, rather than leave his post in plague.

"The pastor, rather than teach falsehood.

"The lawyer, rather than countenance injustice.

"The merchant. What is *his* "due occasion" of death?

"It is the main question for the merchant as for all of us. For, truly, the man who does not know when to die does not know how to live."

He also insists that the aim of *the noble merchant* should be primarily not to make profit for himself, but to provide for the nation. It is no more his function to make money out of the community than it is the clergyman's function to get his stipend, or the soldier's to get his pay. The stipend and the pay, are of course, a due and necessary adjunct, but not the object of life. "This may sound strange," he says, "but the

only real strangeness is that it should so sound," since it proves that we have not yet realised the fact "that the market may have its martyrdoms as well as the pulpit; and trade its heroisms as well as war." All work must be sound and honest or there is condemnation in it. "No religion that ever was preached on this earth of God's rounding ever proclaimed any salvation to sellers of bad goods. If the ghost that is within you, whatever the essence of it, leaves your hand a juggler's and your heart a cheat's; it is not a Holy Ghost, be assured of that; and for the rest, all political economy, as well as all higher virtue, depends first upon sound work."

THE PLACE AND FUNCTION OF WOMAN.

But Mr. Ruskin is careful to indicate not only the duty of man in the world as a son of God, and the servant of his race, but likewise the place which woman is to fill as his counterpart and guide. In his beautiful essay "Of Queen's Gardens," he "sets himself to consider how far woman may be called to exercise a true queenly power, not in their household only, but over all within their sphere. He proceeds to review the heroines of Shakespeare, and points out that there is 'hardly a play that has not a perfect woman in it, steadfast in grave hope, and errorless purpose: Cordelia, Desdemona, Isabella, Hermione, Imogen, Queen Catherine, Perdita, Sylvia, Viola, Rosalind, Helena, and last, and perhaps loveliest, Virgilia, are all faultless; conceived in the highest heroic type of humanity.' He then analyses with critical care the phases of female character, as brought before us by the genius of the Poet, to show that in good books the true woman 'lives the heroic life and exercises heroic influences.'"

He has much to say upon the qualities rightly attri-

butable to the intellect and energy of man, which we do not look for in woman—"her power is for rule, not for battle—and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement and decision. She sees the qualities of things, their claims and their places. Her great function is praise; she enters into no contest, but infallibly adjudges the crown of contest. By her office, and place, she is protected from all danger and temptation. The man in his rough work in open world must encounter all peril and trial; to him, therefore, must be the failure, the offence, the inevitable error: often he must be wounded or subdued; often misled, and always hardened. But he guards the woman from all this; within his house, as ruled by her, unless she herself has sought it, need enter no danger, no temptation, no cause of error or offence. This is the true nature of the home—it is the place of peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all error, doubt, and division. In so far as it is not this, it is not home."

Wise words are these, and happy is the man who in the battle of life has a true and noble woman by his side. Hence says our teacher: "No man ever lived a right life, who had not been chastened by a woman's love, strengthened by her courage, and guided by her discretion." And again: "The soul's armour is never well set to the heart unless a woman's hand has braced it, and it is only when she braces it loosely that the honour of manhood fails."

Here we pause once more to express our thanks to a teacher who thus instructs us with regard to the sacredness of life, and service, and sincere affection. As we ponder his words we find that his conception of the duties of human life is in harmony with his view of its origin. As the root is noble and God-like, so the fruit should be. In this respect it is interesting

to place his thoughts in contrast with the opinions entertained by some who are regarded as holding high place among the thinkers of the present era. Professor Huxley, in his lecture on the "Physical Basis of Life," gives us the naturalistic doctrine of the present day. He selects one of Goëthe's epigrams, and declares that into it he has condensed a survey of all the powers of mankind. It is this: "Why so bustle the people, and cry? To get food, to beget children, and feed them as best they can. Farther attaineth no man, put himself however he will." Thus we learn how that materialistic philosophy, which degrades man with respect to his origin, placing him on a level with the beast, degrades him also with respect to his work and his destiny. But not thus unworthily are we cheated and the grandeur altogether taken from the beatings of our heart, when, turning from this message of despair and death, we hear Ruskin say: "Mighty of heart, mighty of mind, 'magnanimous,'—to be this is indeed to be great in life; to become this increasingly is to 'advance in life,'—in life itself, not in the trappings of it. . . . He only is advancing in life whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into living peace. And the men who have this life in them are the true lords or kings of the earth—they, and they only." Glorious is the heritage bequeathed to us by such teaching as this. As we listen to its high music the modern infidel question: "Is life worth living?" cannot for very shame express itself in articulate speech. We learn the dignity of life by realising its possible ministries, and by viewing it as a school for magnificent beginnings, which shall issue in a divinely appointed end. Our lot and place may be lowly, but as the wayside pool becomes glorious when moon, and stars, and the immeasurable heavens are mirrored in it, so duty, and virtue, and God, look

down into our life and it becomes a sacred thing. And if toiling in obscurity, or discouraged by defeat, we ask what the end shall be if we still press bravely on, our teacher heartens us by the thrilling words: "As the dead body shall be raised to life, so also the defeated soul to victory, if only it has been fighting on the Master's side; has made no covenant with death; nor itself bowed its forehead for its seal. Blind from the prison-house, maimed from the battle, or mad from the tombs, their souls shall surely yet sit, astonished, at His feet who giveth peace. . . . When the time comes to wake up out of the world's sleep, why should it be otherwise than out of the dreams of the night? Singing of birds, first, broken and low, as, not to dying eyes, but eyes that wake to life, 'the casement slowly grows a glimmering square;' and then the grey, and then the rose of dawn; and last the light, whose going forth is to the ends of heaven."

IV.—SOCIAL AND PHILANTHROPIC TEACHING.

'Tis a vile life, that, like a garden pool,
Lies stagnant in the round of personal loves:
That has no ear save for the tinkling lute
Set to small measures; deaf to all the beats
Of that large music rolling o'er the world:
A miserable, petty, low-roofed life,
That knows the mighty orbit of the skies,
Though nought save light and dark in its own cabin.

GEORGE ELIOT.

It may be to some a source of wonder that we should be called upon to study the great Art critic, not only in that relation, but also as a social reformer, stirred to the very depths of his soul by the misery of the poor and anxious to render them effectual help. But this he assures us is the end and purport of all his teaching. "In these books of mine," he says in the fifth volume of "Modern Painters," "their distinctive character as

essays on Art, is their bringing everything to a root in human passion or human hope. Arising first not in any desire to explain the principles of Art, but in the endeavour to defend an individual painter from injustice, they have been coloured throughout—nay, continually altered in shape, and even warped and broken, by digressions respecting social questions, which had for me an interest tenfold greater than the work I had been forced into undertaking. Every principle of painting which I have stated is traced to some vital or spiritual fact; and in my works on architecture the preference accorded finally to one school over another is founded on a comparison of their influences on the life of the workman—a question by all other writers on the subject of architecture wholly forgotten or despised.” Furthermore he tells us in one place that “the teaching of Art is the teaching of everything.” Teach noble Art and at the same time you teach the necessity for noble conduct. “Remember” he says, in another place, “that it is not so much in *buying* pictures as in *being* pictures that you can encourage a noble school.” In seeking for beauty of form in paintings or in statues you naturally look for beauty and not deformity in the living person. Absorbed in the study of the beautiful, the squalid, miserable and besotted poor in the slums and alleys of our cities impress us with the idea of a new misery. Human life must be made beautiful or art only mocks us by its painful contrast with that which we see around us. “I tell you,” he said to the Oxford students as the conclusion of his Art teaching, “that neither sound Art, policy, nor religion can exist in England until, neglecting, if it must be, your own pleasure gardens and pleasure chambers, you resolve that the streets which are the habitation of the poor, and the fields which are the playgrounds of their children, shall be again restored to the rule of the spirits, whosoever they are, in earth and heaven, that

ordain, and reward, with constant and conscious felicity, all that is decent and orderly, beautiful and pure." Thus, as our author reasons of Art, and of artistic work, humanity rises into vision, miserable, yet noble in its misery, and as he deals with the problems which affect the human race, truths costlier than diamonds gleam along the page with an applicability to the present day which is startling and solemn, as if an angel had touched us, bidding us look on the worn toiler in our midst with eyes purged with celestial radiance. The striving of the soul of Ruskin under the burden of social misery, is first uttered in an early pamphlet from his pen on *The Opening of the Crystal Palace*. Here he says: "If, suddenly, in the midst of the enjoyments of the palate and lightness of heart of a London dinner-party, the walls of the chamber were parted, and through their gap, the nearest human beings who were famishing, and in misery, were borne into the midst of the company—feasting, and fancy free—if, pale with sickness, horrible in destitution, broken by despair, body by body, they were laid upon the soft carpet, one beside the chair of every guest, would only the crumbs of the dainties be cast to them? Would only a passing glance, a passing thought, be vouchsafed to them? Yet the actual facts are not altered by the intervention of the house-wall between the table and the sick bed." As time wears on these facts press more and more heavily on the heart of Ruskin, and he is compelled to deal with social questions, feeling that national art is impossible in the midst of so much of national misery and degradation. Hence, writing in another place from his pleasant home on Denmark Hill, he says of the sad murmur of the world outside its gates: "Of those who were causing all the murmur, like the sea round me, and of the myriads imprisoned by the English minotaur of lust for wealth, and condemned to live, if it is to be called life, in the

labyrinth of black walls and loathsome passages between them, which now fills the valley of the Thames, and is called London, not one could hear, that day, any happy bird singing, or look upon any quiet space of the pure grass that is good for seed. And now, gentlemen, I beg you once for all to understand that unless you are minded to bring yourselves, and all whom you can help, out of this curse of darkness that has fallen on our hearts and thoughts, you need not try to do any artwork—it is the vainest of affectations to try to put beauty into shadows, while all the real things that cast them are left in deformity and pain.” Strong and terrible are these words, but not stronger or more terrible than the subject demands, for many things must indeed be sadly out of joint when Christian populations fall on such miserable times and fortunes as they are now mostly suffering.

THE POVERTY OF THE WORKING CLASSES.

The statistical records on this question which have recently been brought to light, convince us that there is something terribly rotten about our boasted modern civilization. They show beyond doubt that the normal state of the average workman alike in town or country is one of pinching poverty, in place of decent comfort, and that with regard to all of them a month of bad trade brings them face to face with hunger and pauperism. It is idle for people living in luxury, and profoundly ignorant of the facts of the case, to say that the poverty of our toiling population arises entirely from drunkenness or extravagance. In his “Life and Labour in East London,” Mr. Booth conclusively shows that, out of a population of 800,000 people, there are at

the most only 4400 who can be rightly classed as loafers and semi-criminals; and what is true of London is true also of the country. That peasant trudging wearily home from the fields, to his supper of weak tea and a bit of rancid bacon and dry bread, is neither lazy, a drunkard, nor extravagant. His woes arise from the fact that he has to support a wife and six or seven children on from nine to twelve shillings a week. We are not dealing now with the criminal classes, but with the toilers in our midst, and facts incontestably prove that the great bulk of them are wretchedly poor, not because they spend foolishly, but because they get so little to spend. This, according to Mr. Ruskin, is a state of things which should not exist in any nation. Hence he says: "A nation's labour, well applied, should be amply sufficient to provide its whole population with good food and comfortable habitation; and not with those only, but with good education besides, and objects of luxury, Art treasures, such as these you have around you now. But by those same laws of Nature and Providence, if the labour of the nation or of the individual be misapplied, and much more if it be insufficient, if the nation or man be indolent and unwise, suffering and want result, exactly in proportion to the indolence and improvidence, to the refusal of labour, or to the misapplication of it. Wherever you see want, or misery, or degradation, in this world about you, there, be sure, either industry has been wanting, or industry has been in error. It is not accident, it is not Heaven-commanded calamity, it is not the original and inevitable evil of man's nature which fill your streets with lamentation, and your graves with prey. It is only that, when there should have been providence, there has been waste; when there should have been labour, there has been lasciviousness; and wilfulness, when there should have been subordination."

THE NECESSITY OF WORK.

In another place Mr. Ruskin goes on to show that much of the poverty which afflicts the masses arises from those drones in the human hive who live on the honey others have gathered but make none themselves, and he repudiates the idea that the proper meaning of the word gentleman is that of "a man living in idleness on other people's labour." "Gentlemen have to learn," he writes, "that it is no part of their duty or privilege to live on other people's toil. They have to learn that there is no degradation in the hardest manual, or the humblest servile, labour, when it is honest. But that there is degradation, and that deep, in extravagance, in bribery, in indolence, in pride, in taking places they are not fit for, or in coining places for which there is no need. . . . By far the greater part of the suffering and crime which exists at this moment in civilised Europe, arises simply from people not understanding this truism—not knowing that produce or wealth is eternally connected by the laws of heaven and earth with resolute labour; but hoping in some way to cheat or abrogate this everlasting law of life, and to feed where they have not furrowed, and be warm where they have not woven.

"I repeat, nearly all our misery and crime result from this one misapprehension. The law of nature is, that a certain quantity of work is necessary to produce a certain quantity of good, of any kind whatever. If you want knowledge, you must toil for it; if food, you must toil for it; and if pleasure, you must toil for it. But men do not acknowledge this law, or strive to evade it, hoping to get their knowledge, and food, and pleasure for nothing; and in this effort they either fail of getting them, and remain ignorant and miserable, or they obtain them by making other men work for their benefit; and then they are tyrants and robbers."

LABOUR THE ONLY WEALTH.

The injustice and robbery of those who do nothing is apparent from the fact that there is really no wealth which has not been originally wrung from the soil either by tillage or by mining. The men in our marts and on our exchanges only scramble for the wealth which has already been created by the worker. They themselves create nothing. Thus the stockbroker on 'Change and the aristocrat in his club, "clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day," really owe their money and their luxury to the sinews and the labour of the toiling masses.

With what force and freshness the case as we have now stated it is put by Mr. Ruskin in the following passage, which may be headed, *A Voice from the Stalls*: "We, of the so-called 'educated' classes, who take it upon us to be the better and upper part of the world, cannot possibly understand our relations to the rest better than we may where actual life may be seen in front of its Shakespearian image, from the stalls of a theatre. I never stand up to rest myself, and look round the house, without renewal of wonder how the crowd in the pit and shilling gallery allow us of the boxes and stalls to keep our places! Think of it—those fellows behind there have housed us and fed us; their wives have washed our clothes, and kept us tidy; they have bought us the best places, brought us through the cold to them; and there they sit behind us, patiently, seeing and hearing what they may. There they pack themselves, squeezed and distant, behind our chairs—we, their elect toys and pet puppets, oiled and varnished and incensed, lounge in front placidly, or, for the greater part, wearily and sickly contemplative. 'You paid for your stalls with your own money,' say you.

Where did you get your money? Some of you—if any reverend gentleman, as I hope, are among us—by selling the Gospel; others by selling justice, others by selling their blood (and no man has any right to sell ought of these three things, any more than a woman her body); the rest, if not by swindling, by simple taxation of the labour of the shilling gallery, or of the yet poorer or better persons who have not so much, or will not spend so much as the shilling to get there. How else should you, or could you, get your money—simpletons?”

Reasoning on the same lines he further says in a letter to working-men: “What you call ‘wages’ practically is the quantity of food which the possessor of the land gives you to work for him. There is finally no ‘capital’ but that. If all the money of all the capitalists in the whole world were destroyed, the notes and bills burnt, the gold irrecoverably buried, and all the machines and apparatus of manufacturers crushed by a mistake of signals in one catastrophe, and nothing remained but the land, with its animals and vegetables, and buildings for shelter—the poorer population would be very little worse off than they are at this present instant; and their labour, instead of being ‘limited’ by the destruction, would be greatly stimulated. They would feed themselves from the animals and growing crops; heap here and there together a few tons of iron-stone, build rough walls round them to get a blast, and in a fortnight they would have iron tools again, and be ploughing and fighting just as usual. It is only we who have the capital who would suffer; we should not be able to live idle as we do now, and many of us—I, for instance—should starve at once.”

APPLIED CHRISTIANITY.

Mr. Ruskin's social teachings have been scouted as the utterances of a mad-man, but they are nothing

more or less than *applied Christianity*. He seeks to bring our employers of labour, our thinkers on social questions, and our battling politicians to the standard of "do unto others as you would that others should do unto you." He proves with irresistible logic that our boasted science of political economy has been little better than a "science of selfishness," and protests against the exclusion from its field of those elements of affection and self-denial on which that Christianity is based, which is professedly accepted as the guide of the nation. He affirms that "no human actions ever were intended by the Maker of men to be guided by balances of expediency, but by balances of justice." And this justice of necessity includes "the affection which one man *owes* to another." Servants are not engines whose motive power is steam, but human souls who demand love and kindly cherishing, and who are swift to respond to any touch of sympathy and humane consideration. Thus the greatest result obtainable in the relation of master and servant will arise, "not through antagonism to each other, but through affection for each other." And it is monstrous to assume that the working-classes cannot respond to all that is kindly and noble if they are only approached in the right way. None have ever legislated wisely for the people who have thought meanly of them, and we love John Ruskin because of his confidence in the human race. Here he is in good company, inasmuch as he stands side by side with the greatest of all teachers. "Will the days never come," asks one, "when men will see that Christ believed in humanity as none of his followers have ever done since—that He, knowing its infirmity better than any other, trusted in its capacity for good more than any other. We are continually told that people cannot be taught this, and cannot learn that, and cannot do the other; and He taught them nothing less than absolute perfection, 'Be

ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' And are we to suppose that He did not mean what He said? Undoubtedly He meant what He said, and we shall do wisely to deal after His method with our master's clamouring at the gate, lest in mad revolt the hands of those who have not, should be placed upon the throats of those who have, and the incensed toiler should say to the idler living in careless luxury on the fruits of his toil, 'Pay me what thou owest.'

THE CLASSES AND THE MASSES.

Very suggestive and admonitory, if startling and unpleasant, are the words of Ruskin speaking in this connection where he says:—"Let me not be thought to speak wildly or extravagantly. It is verily this degradation of the operative into a machine, which, more than any other evil of the times, is leading the mass of the nations everywhere into vain, incoherent, destructive struggling for a freedom of which they cannot explain the nature to themselves. Their universal outcry against wealth, and against nobility, is not forced from them either by the pressure of famine, or the sting of mortified pride. These do much, and have done much in all ages; but the foundations of society were never yet shaken as they are at this day. It is not that men are ill fed, but that they have no pleasure in the work by which they make their bread, and therefore look to wealth as the only means of pleasure. It is not that men are pained by the scorn of the upper classes, but they cannot endure their own; for they feel that the kind of labour to which they are condemned is verily a degrading one, and makes them less than men. Never had the upper classes so much sympathy with the lower, or charity for them, as they have at this day, and yet never were they so much

hated by them: for, of old, the separation between the noble and the poor was merely a wall built by law; now it is a veritable difference in level of standing, a precipice between upper and lower grounds in the field of humanity, and there is pestilential air at the bottom of it. But to feel their souls withering within them, unthanked, to find their whole being sunk into an unrecognised abyss, to be counted off into a heap of mechanism, numbered with its wheels, and weighed with its hammer strokes;—this nature bade not,—this God blesses not,—this humanity for no long time is able to endure.”

SUGGESTED REMEDIES.

Such is the indictment which Ruskin brings against our modern civilisation, such the disease which has smitten it, threatening its very life. What then are the remedies? What the way of atonement for the injustice of which we have been guilty? What the way of escape from the evils which threaten us? Turning for a reply to these questions from him who has uttered the impeachment, we are first reminded, “that in a science dealing with so subtle elements as those of human nature, it is only possible to answer for the final truth of principles, not for the direct success of plans,” and then on pausing until the froth and agitation created by passion and strenuous effort to win attention to unwelcome truths have passed away we arrive at results and counsels of wisdom which it is our national wisdom to take heed to, and our national shame and ultimate ruin to disregard.

In considering the predominance of the commercial and mercenary spirit in our midst, the gross and serious charge of Ruskin against us is that *in piling up our national wealth we have not sufficiently cared for the manhood of our toilers.* “The great cry,” says our

author, "that rises from all our manufacturing cities, louder than their furnace blast, is all in very deed for this,—that we manufacture everything there except men; we blanch cotton, and strengthen steel, and refine sugar, and shape pottery; but to brighten, to strengthen, to refine, or to form a single living spirit, never enters into our estimate of advantages." The wealth of the individual is in no way indicative of the wealth or welfare of the State. The acquirement of wealth by a limited section of the population may, indeed, be working ruin for the State. As Goldsmith puts it:

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay.

How is it that the vast production of wealth in our midst does not lead to a happier distribution? How is it that the rich seem to be continually growing richer, whilst the poverty of the poor is not perceptibly diminished? How is it, to quote once more from Ruskin, that "the greater part of the seeming prosperity of the world is, so far as our present knowledge extends, vain: wholly useless for any kind of good, but having assigned to it a certain inevitable sequence of destruction and of sorrow? Its stress is only the stress of wandering storm; its beauty the hectic of plague; and what is called the history of mankind is too often the record of the whirlwind, and the map of the spreading of the leprosy." Let us pause in the midst of our self-seeking, pause in that ardent pursuit of the science of getting rich which involves the necessity of keeping our neighbour poor, to consider this, for *thoughtful consideration* of the present state of things is our first necessity in order that some sufficient remedy may be fixed upon, to be applied by intelligent and organised effort. "Government and co-operation are in all things the laws of life; anarchy and competition the laws of death." The true

needs of a healthy State are found in the noble lives of the individuals who constitute the State, of *all* the individuals who constitute it, and not of a privileged few. How, then, may this dignity of life be attained by all?

First.—By a wise consideration on the part of the wealthy and those who are eagerly striving after wealth, as to what wealth really means. True wealth does not consist in boundless abundance, but, “in the possession of useful articles *which we can really use.*” Men strain body and soul to pile up a great fortune, but when it is piled how much of it can they really use? Men are not Titans who can consume the earth, but only finite creatures whose real wants are very limited. We may possess fifty coats, but we can only wear one at a time. We may be able to purchase fifty dinners daily, but we can only eat one a day; unless, indeed, like some of the patricians in Rome in the days of its luxury and decay, we take an emetic after we have eaten one, in order that after a little rest we may eat another. Truly does Ruskin say,—“The attraction of riches is too strong, as their authority is too weighty for the reason of mankind.” And again,—“Twenty people can gain money for one who can use it; and the vital question for individual and for nation, is never ‘how much do they make?’ ‘But, to what purpose do they spend?’” . . . There is no wealth but life. Life, including all its powers of love, joy, and of admiration. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings; that man is richest who, having perfected the functions of his own life to the utmost, has also the widest helpful influence, both personal and by means of his possessions, over the lives of others.”

Here, then, we come to the first remedy for the impoverished condition of the toiling poor. Less greed and simpler living on the part of those who possess the

brain power which enables them to win wealth. A finer sense of brotherhood, and a deeper joy in some degree of self-denial for the good of others. Three-fourths of the demands existing in the world are romantic, and three-fourths of its luxuries, as far as the health and happiness of those who revel in them are concerned, would be better flung away. The essence of wealth is in its power over man, and the grandeur of wealth is to make man better and happier. Hence, our great teacher writes, in words more precious than rubies:

“ Perhaps it may even appear, after some consideration, that the persons themselves *are* the wealth—that these pieces of gold with which we are in the habit of guiding them, are, in fact, nothing more than a kind of Byzantine harness or trappings, very glittering and beautiful in barbaric sight, wherewith we bridle the creatures; but that if these same living creatures could be guided without the fretting and jingling of the Byzants in their mouths and ears, they might themselves be more valuable than their bridles. In fact, it may be discovered that the true veins of wealth are purple—and not in Rock, but in Flesh—perhaps even that the final outcome and consummation of all wealth is in the producing as many as possible full-breathed, bright-eyed, and happy-hearted human creatures. Our modern wealth, I think, has rather a tendency the other way;—most political economists appearing to consider multitudes of human creatures not conducive to wealth, or at best conducive to it only by remaining in a dim-eyed and narrow-chested state of being.

“ Nevertheless, it is open, I repeat, to serious question, which I leave to the reader’s pondering, whether, among national manufactures, that of Souls of a good quality may not at last turn out a quite leadingly lucrative one? Nay, in some far-away and yet undreamt-of hour, I can even imagine that England may cast all thoughts of

possessive wealth back to the barbaric nations among whom they first arose; and that, while the sands of the Indus and adamant of Golconda may yet stiffen the housings of the charger, and flash from the turban of the slave, she, as a Christian mother, may at last attain to the virtues and the treasures of a Heathen one, and be able to lead forth her Sons, saying,—‘These are my Jewels.’”

Having, under the guidance of a noble teacher, reached this point of vision, let us now consider.

Secondly, how the wealthier part of the nation can help the toiling poor without pauperising or degrading them. This may be done:

1. *By the provision for them of sweeter homes.*

How much of the filth, the drunkenness, and the degradation of the masses arises from the homes, if homes they can be called, in which they live. We want all our rookeries razed to the ground, and decent dwellings raised in their place for the industrial poor. The effect of the filthy dens in which so many of them live can be traced everywhere in the life of the people. The infantile death-rate in Bethnal Green is double that in Belgravia. Of the children who die in Glasgow before they complete their fifth year, Dr. Russell tells us that, thirty-two per cent. die in houses of one apartment, and only two per cent. in houses of five apartments and upwards, and the effect upon their moral life is truly terrible. Truly is it said “that they are not so much born into life as damned into it.” And there is terrible force in the words which Kingsley makes the poacher’s wife say to the squire in “Yeast”—

We quarrelled like beasts; and who wonders?
 What self-respect could we keep?
 Worse housed than your hacks or your pointers,
 Worse fed than your hogs and your sheep.
 Our daughters with base-born babies
 Have wandered away in their shame:
 If your misses had slept where they did,
 Your misses might do the same.

It is idle to lecture the poor about sobriety and virtue and content while they are cursed with such an environment as this. Hence Ruskin writes: "Nothing appears to me at once more ludicrous and more melancholy than the way the people of the present age usually talk about the morals of labourers. You hardly ever address a labouring man upon his prospects in life, without quietly assuming that he is to possess, at starting, as a small moral capital to begin with, the virtue of Socrates, the philosophy of Plato, and the heroism of Epaminondas. 'Be assured, my good man,' you say to him, 'that if you work steadily for ten hours a day all your life long, and if you drink nothing but water, or the very mildest beer, and live on very plain food, and never lose your temper, and go to church every Sunday, and always remain content in the position in which Providence has placed you, and never grumble, nor swear, and always keep your clothes decent, and rise early, and use every opportunity of improving yourself, you will get on very well, and never come to the parish.'

"All this is exceedingly true; but before giving the advice so confidently, it would be well if we sometimes tried it practically ourselves, and spent a year or so at some hard manual labour, not of an entertaining kind—ploughing or digging, for instance, with a very moderate allowance of beer; nothing but bread and cheese for dinner; no papers nor muffins in the morning; no sofas nor magazines at night; one small room for parlour and kitchen; and a large family of children always in the middle of the floor. If we think we could, under these circumstances, enact Socrates or Epaminondas entirely to our own satisfaction, we shall be somewhat justified in requiring the same behaviour from our poorer neighbours; but if not, we should surely consider whether, among the various forms of oppression of the poor, we

may not rank as one of the first and likeliest—the oppression of expecting too much from them.” And, in sympathy with this reasoning, he insists, that in harmony with the Divine order given in the record of Genesis, our first duty to the poor is that of: “Letting in light where there is now darkness; especially mindful to give entrance to beams of light into poor rooms, back streets, and crowded alleys. Let daylight and sunlight peep in here.”

Much can be done also

2. *By the Influence of Education.*—It is worthy of notice that long years ago, when the country was yet fast asleep on the question, and the Church alone had realised its importance, Mr. Ruskin urged that schools for youth should be established at Government cost, and under Government discipline over the whole country. Also, that every child born in the country should be required to pass through them. As to the cost of their maintenance, he says that “the economy in crime alone (quite one of the most costly articles of luxury in the modern European market), which such schools would induce, would suffice to support them ten times over.” These words were prophetic, and we rejoice that their truth is now being proved.

3. *Secure Work for the Unemployed.*—This is another feature in Mr. Ruskin’s system of social amelioration. He suggests: “That any man or woman, or boy, or girl, out of employment, should be at once received at the nearest Government school, and set to such work as it appeared, on trial, they were fit for, at a fixed rate of wages, determinable every year;—that, being found incapable of work through ignorance, they should be taught, or being found incapable of work through sickness, should be tended; but that being found objecting to work, they should be set, under compulsion of the strictest nature, to the more painful

and degrading forms of necessary toil, especially to that in mines and other places of danger (such danger being, however, diminished to the utmost by careful regulation and discipline), and the due wages of such work be retained, cost of compulsion first abstracted—to be at the workman's command so soon as he has come to sounder mind respecting the laws of employment.

4. *Provide that the Worker shall find Joy in his Work.*—Mr. Ruskin has uttered a powerful invective against the thought-killing work of the mass of our labouring classes—work in which there is food for neither their intellectual nor moral qualities. “You must either make a tool of the creature or a man of him,” he says; “you cannot make both.” “Men were not intended to work with the accuracy of tools, to be precise and perfect in all their actions. If you will have that precision out of them, and make their fingers measure degrees like cog-wheels, and their arms strike curves like compasses, you must inhumanise them. All the energy of their spirit must be given to make cogs and compasses of themselves. All their attention and strength must go to the accomplishment of the mean act. The eye of the soul must be bent upon the finger-point, and the soul's force must feel all the invisible nerves that guide it, ten hours a day, that it may not err from its steady precision, and so soul and sight be worn away, and the whole human being be lost at last—a heap of sawdust so far as its intellectual work in the world is concerned; saved only by its heart, which cannot go into the forms of cogs and compasses, but extends, after the ten hours are over, into fireside humanity.”

These words may seem extravagant, but it is without question that much of the drunkenness which disgraces us as a nation is due to the miserable monotony which curses the lives of many alike in their work and in their

homes. They turn to strong drink, with its glow of fancies for the brain and of deceitful summer in the veins, or to the coarsest forms of pleasure, that their life may not be utterly without relief or change. Every manufacturing town in the kingdom is filled with joyless lives, lives needing felicity as well as food. The marvellous increase in the production of national wealth cannot be a subject of much congratulation until it can be shown that this greater wealth is so distributed that the labourer can frequently turn from his toil to enjoy the pleasures of the mind, or to commune with the loveliness which nature has spread around him. The husband-man alone is saved from this curse of utter joylessness, since "so long as men live by bread, the far-away valleys must laugh as they are covered with the gold of God, and the shouts of His happy multitudes ring round the wine-press and the well."

5. *Let the People Share in the Possession of the Land.*—Our law favours the aggregation of land into large properties, and leaves little or no room for the peasant proprietor. With the growth of national wealth so many compete for the limited quantity of land that is brought into the market that the poor man has no chance. If a hired labourer saves twenty pounds he is at a loss what to do with it. What a stimulus it would give to prudent thrift if a definite prospect were held out that a labourer might, in the course of time, by means of his saving, secure a small landed property. In Australia three or four years' thrift will make the labourer the owner of the land which he cultivates. Concerning this point Mr. Ruskin says: "The right action of a State respecting its land is to secure it in various portions to those of its citizens who deserve to be trusted with it, according to their respective desires and proved capacities . . . for the most part leaving them free (in its management), but interfering in cases

of gross mismanagement or abuse of power. And in the case of great old families which always ought to be, and in some measure, however decadent, still truly are, the noblest monumental architecture of the kingdom . . . so much land ought to be granted to them in perpetuity as may enable them to live thereon with all circumstances of State and outward nobleness; *but their income must in no wise be derived from the rents of it.*"

6. *Let things be so arranged that the Toiler shall Share more fully in the Results of his Toil.*—Mr. Ruskin shows that there is "a wide difference between being captains or governors of work, and taking all the profits of it." The manufacturer, as captain of an industrial army, should allow the workers to share in the profits of their industry. The gulf should be less wide between the mill-owner and the mill-hand, and between the landed proprietor and the tiller of the soil. Why should estates, luxurious leisure, and all that adorns civilised existence, exist for the masters, and for the masters only? With exquisite irony Mr. Ruskin says in "*Fors Clavigera*": "Nearly every problem of State policy and economy, as at present understood and practised, consists in some device for persuading you labourers to go and dig up dinner for us reflective and æsthetical persons, who like to sit still, and think, or admire. So that when we get to the bottom of the matter, we find the inhabitants of this earth broadly divided into two great masses;—the peasant paymasters—spade in hand, original and imperial producers of turnips; and, waiting on them all round, a crowd of polite persons, modestly expectant of turnips, for some—too often theoretical—service. There is, first, the clerical person, whom the peasant pays in turnips for giving him moral advice; then the legal person, whom the peasant pays in turnips for telling him, in black letters, that his

house is his own; there is, thirdly, the courtly person, whom the peasant pays in turnips for presenting a celestial appearance to him; there is, fourthly, the literary person, whom the peasant pays in turnips for talking daintily to him; and there is, lastly, the military person, whom the peasant pays in turnips for standing, with a cocked hat on, in the middle of the field, and exercising a moral influence upon the neighbours." Now why should this state of things be perpetuated for ever? Why should the real producer of wealth, he who wrings it from the earth either by tillage or by mining, be the poorest man in the community? How is property to be more equally and happily divided? How is this production, on a large scale, to become also happiness? On a large scale, how is this present industrial economy to be *national*, as well as individual wealth? It has been usual to denounce all co-operation as a phase of Communism; but it can only be so regarded by those who lie under the dominion of absurd and ignorant prejudices. The instances, published so long since as the first edition of Mr. Mill's "Political Economy," assure us how successful a wise co-operative industry may be; and Mr. Fawcett adds to these others, clearly demonstrating that the poorest artisans, by forming themselves into associations, may raise themselves above the position of hired labourers, and become successful traders. One of the noblest and most successful illustrations is that of the Rochdale Pioneers' Society, which began with twenty-eight weavers, who raised, with great difficulty, £20, in contributions of twopence, afterwards threepence a week; its capital now, after a steady triumph through days of extraordinary trouble and darkness, amounts to nearly £20,000. Take, again, such cases as the firm of Barlow & Jones, of Manchester and Bolton, where, on the formation of the concern into a limited liability

company by the late noble and philanthropic James Barlow, the operatives were offered the first shares, and were assisted, as far as possible, in the purchase of them. And the result has been that by their thrift in the exercise of their labour, and their interested attention to their work, good dividends have been paid by the concern, while others of the same class, held in the hands of a few, have languished and failed. Why should not successes such as these result in a wider application of the principle of co-operative labour?

7. *A System which shall Procure Decent Provision for the Aged Poor.*—The condition of our English society is so faulty that the very charity, which in some measure lightens its sorrows, is bad. It is graceless, hard, and unjust, like the operation of the present Poor Law, which treats poverty as if it were a crime, and consigns the worn toiler, after his long years of labour, to a house which is little better than a prison. Now, Mr. Ruskin provides in his system that "for the old and destitute comfort and home should be provided, which would be honourable instead of disgraceful to the receiver." "For," he continues, "a labourer serves his country with his spade, just as a man in the middle ranks of life serves it with sword, pen, or lancet. If the service be less, and, therefore, the wages during health less, then the reward when health is broken may be less, but not less honourable; and it ought to be quite as natural and straightforward a matter for a labourer to take his pension from his parish, because he has deserved well of his parish, as for a man in higher rank to take his pension from his country, because he has deserved well of his country."

8. *The Inculcation of Individual Effort and Self-respect.*—Mr. Ruskin continually insists that it is neither in the power of systems or of governments to enrich or ennoble the worker without his own effort—that his true

uplifting must be self-uplifting. He is neither a sycophant, fawning for the favour of the masses, nor a demagogue, set to fill them with hate and with the fever of impossible desires, but a wise and tender friend, ever more ready to warn or to rebuke, than to flatter. Hence, in his letters to working-men, published under the title of "*Fors Clavigera*," he says at the very outset, "And first I beg you most solemnly to convince yourselves of the partly comfortable, partly formidable fact, that your prosperity is in your own hands. That only in a remote degree does it depend on external matters, and, least of all, on forms of Government." And, again, he says, in the same fruitful book: "On the first of May, you shall consider with me what you can do, or let me, if still living, tell you what I know you can do—those of you, at least, who will promise—(with the help of the three strong Fates), these three things:

"1. To do your own work well, whether it be for life or death.

"2. To help other people at theirs, when you can, and seek to avenge no injury.

"3. To be sure you can obey good laws before you seek to alter bad ones."

Again, he says in another letter: "I have been asked to contribute to the purchase of the Alexandra Park; and I will not; and beg you, my working readers, to understand, once for all, that I wish your homes to be comfortable and refined; and that I will resist, to the utmost of my power, all schemes founded on the vile modern notion that you are to be crowded in kennels till you are nearly dead, that other people may make money by your work, and then taken out in squads by tramway and railway, to be revived and refined by science and art. Your first business is to make your homes healthy and delightful: then, keep your wives and children there, and let your return to *them*

be your daily 'holy day.' " Once more, in the same book, we read: "My friends, we have been thinking, perhaps, to-day, more than we ought of our masters' faults,—scarcely enough of our own. If you would have the upper classes do *their* duty, see that you also do yours. See that you can obey good laws, and good lords, or law-wards, if you once get them—that you believe in goodness enough to know what a good law is. A good law is one that holds whether you recognise and pronounce it or not; a bad law is one that cannot hold, however much you ordain and pronounce it. Read your Carlyle with all your heart, and with the best brain you can give; and you will learn from him first, the eternity of good law, and the need of obedience to it: then, concerning your own immediate business, you will learn further this, that the beginning of all good law, and nearly the end of it, is in these two ordinances,—That every man shall do good work for his bread; and secondly, That every man shall have good bread for his work. But the first of these is the only one you have to think of. If you are resolved that the work shall be good, the bread will be sure; if not,—believe me, there is neither steam plough nor steam mill, go they never so glibly, that will win it from the earth long, either for you, or the Ideal Landed Proprietor." Again, in another place, he says: "No political constitution can ennoble knaves; no privileges can assist them; no possessions enrich them. Their gains are occult curses; comfortless loss their truest blessing; failure and pain Nature's only mercy to them. Look to it, therefore, first that you get some wholesome honesty for the foundation of all things." Taking the Bible as his guide, Mr. Ruskin teaches that in the simple life of the workman true nobleness may be found if he only cares to cultivate those things which tend to it, and to rid himself of the fever of those vain ambitions

which are the constant hectic of the fool. He insists that a man's life consists not in the abundance of *things* which he possesses, but in honesty, sobriety, self-reverence, and self-control. We truly live not by fine houses or costly dinners, but by Admiration, Hope, and Love. "Admiration — the power of discerning and taking delight in what is beautiful in visible Form, and lovely in human Character; and, necessarily, striving to produce what is beautiful in form, and to become what is lovely in character.

"Hope — the recognition, by true Foresight, of better things to be reached hereafter, whether by ourselves or others; necessarily issuing in the straightforward and undisappointable effort to advance, according to our proper power, the gaining of them.

"Love, both of family and neighbour, faithful, and satisfied."

And, again, he says: "All effectual advancement towards the true felicity of the human race must be by individual, not public effort. Certain general measures may aid, certain revised laws guide, such advancement; but the measure and law which have first to be determined are those of each man's home. . . . What is chiefly needed in England at the present day is to show the quantity of pleasure that may be obtained by a consistent, well-administered competence, modest, confessed, and laborious. We need examples of people who, leaving heaven to decide whether they are to rise in the world, decide for themselves that they will be happy in it, and have resolved to seek — not greater wealth, but simpler pleasure; not higher fortune, but deeper felicity; making the first of possessions, self-possession; and honouring themselves in the harmless pride and calm pursuits of peace." And, again, we read: "To watch the corn grow and the blossoms set; to draw hard breath over the ploughshare or spade; to

see, to think, to love, to hope, to pray—these are the things that make men happy; they have always had the power of doing this, they never will have power to do more.” Hence the *Crown* that he promises to his disciples is but of *Wild Olive* :

“The tree that grows carelessly, tufting the rocks with no vivid bloom, no verdure of branch; only with soft snow of blossom, and scarcely fulfilled fruit, mixed with grey leaf and thorn-set stem; no fastening of diadem for you but with such sharp embroidery! But this, such as it is, you may win, while yet you live: type of grey honour and sweet rest. Freeheartedness, and graciousness, and undisturbed trust, and requited love, and the sight of the peace of others, and the ministry to their pain; these, and the blue sky above you, and the sweet waters and flowers of the earth beneath; and mysteries and presences, innumerable, of living things,—may yet be here your riches; untormenting and divine: serviceable for the life that now is; nor, it may be, without promise of that which is to come.”

If these be not words of true wisdom, where shall we find them, unless indeed it be in the utterances of Him, the “mighty Seer and Poet blest,” who came to reveal the Eternal and Divine to a wondering world, so ready to criticise, and so slow to learn? And since it is at His feet the teacher of whom we are now writing has continually sat, with the wisdom of a Seer and the heart of a child, there is yet one other thing which suggests itself to him as a means of uplifting for the toiling masses, and it is

9. *The Inculcation of Vital Godliness.*—Hence, in laying down the principles, in the Divine order given in the book of Genesis, which all must follow who would fain be “workers together with Him” in the ennobling of the people, he urges as the last and greatest necessity the “breathing into the clay and lower nature of man

the love of God, and leading him forth to a higher level, from whence he may realise that, being made in God's image, it is his privilege to know Him and to serve Him."

Yes, this is after all the great uplifting force, that man should be "partakers of the Divine nature," a force which crushes into the space of one magnificent resolve all the slow processes of evolution, emancipating the spirit at a bound from every meanness and from every thralldom which would debase and darken. And for every human spirit this gate of life is open. The poorest and the lowliest may, "by due steps, aspire to lay their just hands on the golden key which opens the palace of eternity," and may enter upon the heirship of "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Earth may reserve her honours for the chosen few. Earth may give her race to the swift, and her battle to the strong. But there are none so poor, so sad, or so unfortunate, but they may rise to the beauty and the royalty of this heavenly calling. Hands grimed by labour may grasp the sceptre. Brows shaded by suffering may wear this diadem. This guerdon is reserved not for great powers either given or acquired, but for the faithful use of the powers we possess, whether large or small. Here is no scientific limitation of the survival of the fittest while in the progress of a merciless development the weak are crushed to the wall, but this is a life which the poor, shuffling widow, with her two mites, may claim, and to whose divine altitudes a Lazarus may soar.

Earth hath her price for what earth gives us;
 The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in;
 The man hath his fee who tries to heal us;
 We bargain for the graves we lie in;
 At the devil's mart all things are sold,
 Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold.
 For a cap and bells our lives we pay,
 Bubbles we earn with our whole soul's tasking;
 'Tis only God that is given away,
 'Tis only heaven may be had for the asking.

Such are some of the remedies which Ruskin suggests for the healing of the maladies which afflict the body politic and which threaten the very life of our civilisation. He beholds in our modern society an aristocracy which has abdicated its functions, a middle class largely given up to greed, a Church to a great extent divorced from Christianity, a working class struggling in the dark, but dimly conscious of injustice, and he pleads like an angel trumpet tongued for a new order of things. He yearns to kill the thought which maddens, and to fill the void which despairs. He wants not only leasehold, and freehold, and copyhold, but consciencehold, and lovehold, and Christhold. He preaches a grand crusade against poverty, disease, indignity, social hatreds, separation of classes; against the severance of justice from law, of the Gospel from the Church, of Christ from Christianity, and of earth from heaven. He shows that when people are sunk down, sunk in masses, sunk from the decay of the fair humanities within them, they cannot uplift themselves without outward help, and that, in seeking their happiness and securing their well-being, Providence has committed to us a portion of its functions. To this end he inculcates for the wealthy the wisdom and the duty of simpler living that they may the more nobly serve the suffering, the needy, and the degraded around them. He asks whether, on due and honest thought over these things, "luxury would be desired by any of us if we saw clearly at our sides the suffering which accompanies it in the world. Luxury is indeed possible in the future — innocent and exquisite; luxury for all and by the help of all; but luxury at present could only be enjoyed by the ignorant; the cruellest man living could not sit at his feast unless he sat blindfold." He bids the titled and the privileged to be more in the habit of seeking honour from their

descendants than their ancestors; thinking it better to be nobly remembered than nobly born; and striving so to live that their sons, and their sons' sons, for ages to come, may still lead their children reverently to the doors out of which they have been carried to the grave, saying, "Look, this was his house, this was his chamber." They are to own money or lands that others may be blest by such ownership, and they are to know

Not for knowing's sake
But to become as stars to men for ever.

Moving through life they are to say, in words which might fitly be written in stars upon the vault of heaven, "I will strive to raise my own body and soul daily into higher powers of duty and happiness; not in rivalry or contention with others, but for the help, delight, honour of others, and for the joy and peace of my own life."

Lovely also, beyond any other words spoken to this generation, are those words in which he bids woman consecrate her powers for this high service. "You have heard it said," he writes in "Sesame and Lilies," "that flowers only flourish rightly in the garden of some one who loves them. I know you would like that to be true; you would think it a pleasant magic if you could flush your flowers into brighter bloom by a kind look upon them: nay, more, if your look had the power, not only to cheer, but to guard them—if you could bid the black blight turn away, and the knotted caterpillar spare—if you could bid the dew fall upon them in the drought, and say to the south wind, in frost — 'Come, thou south, and breathe upon my garden, that the spices of it may flow out.' This you would think a great thing? And do you think it not a greater thing, that all this, (and how much more than this!) you *can* do, for fairer flowers than these — flowers that could

bless you for having blessed them, and will love you for having loved them; — flowers that have eyes like yours, and thoughts like yours, and lives like yours; which, once saved, you save for ever? Is this only a little power? Far among the moorlands and the rocks, — far in the darkness of the terrible streets, — these feeble florets are lying, with all their fresh leaves torn, and their stems broken — will you never go down to them, nor set them in order in their little fragrant beds, nor fence them in their shuddering from the fierce wind? Shall morning follow morning, for you, but not for them; and the dawn rise to watch, far away, those frantic Dances of Death; but no dawn rise to breathe upon these living banks of wild violet, and woodbine, and rose; nor call to you, through your casement,—call (not giving you the name of the English poet's lady, but the name of Dante's great Matilda, who, on the edge of happy Lethe, stood, wreathing flowers with flowers), saying:

Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad
And the musk of the roses blown.

Will you not go down among them?—among those sweet living things, whose new courage, sprung from the earth with the deep colour of heaven upon it, is starting up in strength of goodly spire; and whose purity, washed from the dust, is opening, bud by bud, into the flower of promise;—and still they turn to you, and for you, “The larkspur listens—I hear! I hear! And the lily whispers—I wait.”

And this high teaching of John Ruskin has not been shamed by his own life. As a living epistle he strives for the personal embodiment of his own conceptions of right and duty. “John Ruskin,” says Grant Allen, “is like Chaucer's Parson, who:

Christes lore, and his apostles twelve,
He taughte, but first he folwede it himselve.

He has spent not a tithe, nor a half, but the whole of a large fortune in public and private charities. He has set Miss Octavia Hill to manage his London property on principles which have since been adopted as one of the essentials of latter-day philanthropy. He has given his most treasured drawings and minerals to public galleries and museums. He has revived village industries, and inspired co-operative undertakings, and he has established and endowed a guild which has for its primary object the redeeming of waste lands, and establishment thereon of well-ordered lives. Some works are great for what they accomplish; others for what they suggest. At present Ruskin's fame stands on his achievement as a writer. Twenty years hence he may be best remembered for his experiments as a social reformer."

This truly great man may be misunderstood by some, and maligned by others. The selfish and the indolent may say as they said of a greater one, "he hath a devil and is mad," but nevertheless:

He will leave behind
Powers that will work for him; air, earth, and skies,
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget him; he has great allies;
His friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

V.—RELIGIOUS TEACHING.

Wisdom and spirit of the universe!
Thou soul that art the Eternity of thought,
That gives to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion not in vain.
By day or starlight thus, from my first dawn
Of childhood, did'st thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
But with high objects, with enduring things—
With life and nature—purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying, by such discipline,
Both pain and fear, until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

WORDSWORTH.

We now turn to ask what this great teacher has to say on the sublimest of all themes.

Man cannot "live by bread alone," nor yet by the presence of beauty in material things; nor yet by the knowledge which illumines the intellect in its search for truth; nor yet by the human love which lends to home its sacredness. No, there is a higher presence and a profunder reality which continually besets us, and which, while dimly realised by the earthly or the sensual mind, haunts the pure and noble spirit with a persistency and an intimacy of touch which it must recognise, and in the consciousness of which it must bow down and worship. Of this presence John Ruskin has ever been regardful, and though he may not be able to express his faith in a syllogism, or to accept all the dogmas into which men in their hunger for the definite and the knowable have crushed their sense of the infinite, he is yet deeply impressed with the significance which religion lends to human existence and human effort, and all his writings testify that he is in the sanctuary of his inner consciousness grandly at home with God. And indeed our wonder would kindle into sheer amazement if this were not so, for such spirits are not touched save to the finest issues. If this man could escape from the great presence, or wander from the felt embrace of the "everlasting arms," it would be a plea for atheism more mighty than all the blasphemies which have ever cast their spume towards the silent unavenging and untainted heavens. But we find that it is not so. Rather is he haunted by the nearness of the besetting God more vividly and more constantly than he can well bear, and ready to enter into the mood of Job when like a wayward child under the sleepless watch of the great Father he closes on one occasion the door of the presence-chamber with the cry "Am I a sea or a

whale that Thou settest a watch over me?" For John Ruskin :

Earth's crammed with heaven, and every common bush
Afire with God.

Every whisper of the vagrant wind which bloweth where it listeth ; every colour of the dawning or the dying light ; every aspect of the changing seasons ; every curve and fold of the evening clouds "which on their restless fronts bear stars" ; every mood of the mighty, deathful, illimitable sea ; all the mysteries of gravitation, and electricity, and vital growth speak to him of

The motion and the spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

The anchor of his purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of his heart, and soul
Of all his moral being.

In the high places of Nature he has seen and recognised the footprints of Deity ; in the glory of the midnight heavens he has traced His handy-work ; in the pageant of history he has marked His righteousness ; in the Sacred Scriptures he has communed with His thoughts ; in "the Word made flesh" he has felt the throb of His heart ; and in his own soul he has found Him who delights to dwell with the humble and the contrite.

The loving counsel to Turner, then living, with which he closed his opening volume, has been his own guide in expatiating on the true, the beautiful, and the good. "It is, therefore," he says, "that we pray him to utter nothing lightly, to do nothing regardlessly. He stands upon an eminence from which he looks back over the universe of God, and forward over the generations of men. Let every work of his hand be a history of the one, and a lesson to the other. Let each exertion of his mighty mind be both hymn and prophecy : adoration to the Deity, revelation to mankind."

In unrolling the treasures of art knowledge, or describing natural objects, he frequently makes fine transitions to a greater theme suggested by their train of thought, to some grand or beautiful illustration of religious truth associated therewith.

For instance, in the third volume of "Modern Painters," after describing the more general effect of some bold mountain scenery upon his mind, he goes on to say: "Although there was no definite religious sentiment mingled with it, there was a continual perception of sanctity in the whole of nature, from the slightest thing to the vastest; an instructive awe mixed with delight; an indefinable thrill, such as we sometimes imagine to indicate the presence of a disembodied spirit. I could only feel this perfectly when I was alone. . . . This joy in nature seemed to me to come of a sort of heart-hunger, satisfied with the presence of a Great and Holy Spirit." He further tells us that in early manhood he read a chapter in the Bible steadily in the morning and the evening, and declares that all his "love of the beauty, or sense of the majesty, of natural things were in direct ratio to conditions of devotional feeling." "I never," he adds, "climbed any mountain, alone, without kneeling down, by instinct, on its summit, to pray."

The two last chapters of the fourth volume of "Modern Painters," entitled "The Mountain Gloom," and "The Mountain Glory," are also peculiarly rich in their religious significance. It would be difficult anywhere to find a nobler triumph of English prose, inspired with the truest poetic feeling, rich in appreciative criticism of art and nature, and infused throughout with a religious power which bears the writer aloft, as on the wings of a seraph. How exquisitely beautiful, also, in the midst of a tenderly pensive description of the oldest of the Venetian cathedrals, is the

lovely sentence thrown in, which reads: "For the actual condition of the exiles who built the cathedral of Tarcello is exactly typical of the spiritual condition which every Christian ought to recognise in himself: a state of homelessness on earth except so far as he can make the Most High his habitation." Consider again on this point that passage in which he replies to the objections of those who say that moral and religious reflections are too much intermixed with his observations on Art.

"We treat God with irreverence by banishing Him from our thoughts, not by referring to His will on slight occasions. His is not the finite authority or intelligence which cannot be troubled with small things. There is nothing so small but that we may honour God by asking His guidance of it, or insult Him by taking it into our own hands; and what is true of the Deity is equally true of His Revelation. We use it most reverently when most habitually: our insolence is in ever acting without reference to it, our true honouring of it is in its universal application. I have been blamed for the familiar introduction of its sacred words. I am grieved to have given pain by so doing; but my excuse must be my wish that those words were made the ground of every argument and the test of every action. We have them not often enough on our lips, nor deeply enough in our memories, nor loyally enough in our lives. The snow, the vapour, and the stormy wind fulfil His word. Are our acts and thoughts lighter and wilder than these—that we should forget it?"

Some have affirmed that at one period of his life, deeply influenced by Carlyle and others, Ruskin lost his faith in God, and wandered into doubt and darkness, but ere long the Divine homesickness drove him back to the old anchorage. Hence, at the close of his

"*Fors Clavigera*," he gives utterance to the following pathetic regret that he did not appeal more directly to the religious consciousness in man, and to those finer spirits, more numerous than he had supposed, who "walk in the light of the Lord."

"Looking back upon my efforts for the last twenty years, I believe that their failure has been in very great part owing to my compromise with the infidelity of the outer world, and any endeavour to base my pleading upon motives of ordinary produce and kindness instead of on the primary duty of loving God—foundation other than which can no man lay. I thought myself speaking to a crowd which could only be influenced by visible utility; nor was I in the least aware how many entirely good and holy persons were living in the faith and love of God as vividly and practically now as ever in the early enthusiasm of Christendom. . . . These have shown me, with lovely imitation, in how many secret places the prayer was made which I had foolishly listened for at the corners of the streets; and on how many hills which I had thought left desolate the hosts of heaven still moved in chariots of fire."

In a still finer passage, at the very close, Mr. Ruskin calls upon those who are faithful to the kingdom of God in secret to witness for it openly. "Surely the time is come when all these faithful armies should lift up the standard of the Lord, no more hidden nor overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. If the enemy cometh in like a flood how much more may the rivers of Paradise? *All the world is but as one orphanage, so long as its children know not God their Father; and all wisdom and knowledge is only more bewildered darkness, so long as you have not taught them the fear of the Lord.* Not to be taken out of the world in monastic sorrow, but to be kept from its evil in

shepherded peace—ought not this to be done for all the children held at the fonts beside which we vow in their name to renounce the world! Renounce?—nay, ought we not at least to redeem?”

RELIGION IN ART.

Yet, despite the confession of neglect, which we have recorded above, how noble and constant have been the appeals of this great teacher to the religious consciousness of humanity, alike in his dealing with Art and with Nature. For him, both have ever received their highest significance from the Power whose beauty manifested in outward things inspires the one, and whose creative energy is the source and explanation of the other. How beautiful, for instance, are the words found at the close of the first volume of “The Laws of Fiesole,” where he says: “I have endeavoured to teach through my past life that this fair tree Igdrasil of Human Art can only flourish when its dew is Affection; its air, Devotion; the rock of its roots, Patience; and its sunshine, God.”

He has told us in words which we shall not willingly let die, that *all great Art is praise*. It is man's delight in God's work. The perfection of Greek Art was the expression of their delight in God's noblest material work—the flowing yet disciplined beauty of the human body. The perfection of early Italian Art was its delight in Saints serving or praising God. And as with painting so with architecture. Those fair fronts of mouldering wall reared by the Gothic artists were filled with sculptures of the saints whom the Cathedral builders worshipped, and of the flowers they loved. And as all noble Art springs from delight in the forms and laws of God's creation, so to that delight it appeals, and its appeal is successful and praiseworthy

just in proportion as it is true to Nature and to that beauty in Nature which, according to Ruskin, is "the expression of the creating Spirit of the universe." Ruskin never debates the vexed question of the relation of Art to Religion. According to him, all noble Art is Religion. By Religion is meant "the feelings of love, reverence, or dread with which the human mind is affected by its conceptions of spiritual being." Recognise this spiritual being, and "name it as you will": if you recognise it, and recognising revere, you are religious; and Art, as the interpreter of beauty, is the prime agent in showing you noble grounds for such noble emotion. Hence also the true artist is necessarily a man of true religion. The world of beauty is like the Beryl in Rossetti's ballad:

None sees here but the pure alone.

Such has in fact been the burden of all Ruskin's books on the history of artists and art schools. It is the decadence of the art of architecture corresponding with a decay of vital religion that he finds written on the "Stones of Venice"; the clearness of early faith that he finds reflected in the brightness of the pictures of Florence; the gladness of Greek religion that gives for him its sharpness to the "Ploughshare of Pentelicus."

In harmony with this idea he shows how the Cathedral of St. Mark's, with its low walls spread before the gazer, like the pages of a book, was really the Stone Bible of Venice. Hence he writes of that Cathedral: "It was in the hearts of the old Venetian people far more than a place of worship. It was at once a type of the Redeemed Church of God, and a scroll for the written word of God. It was to be to them both an image of the Bride, 'all glorious within, her clothing of wrought gold,' and the actual table of the Law and the Testimony, written within and without.

And whether honoured as the Church or the Bible, was it not fitting that neither the gold nor the crystal should be spared in the adornment of it; that as the symbol of the Bride, the building of the wall thereof should be of jasper, and the foundations of it garnished with all manner of precious stones; and that as the channel of the Word, that triumphant utterance of the Psalmist should be true of it—‘I have rejoiced in the way of Thy testimonies, as much as in all riches’? And shall we not look with changed temper down the long perspective of St. Mark’s Place, towards the sevenfold gates and glowing domes of the temple, when we know with what solemn purpose the shafts of it were lifted above the populous square? Men met there from all countries of the earth, for traffic and for pleasure; but above the crowd swaying for ever to and fro, in the restlessness of avarice, or thirst of delight, was seen perpetually the glory of the temple, attesting to them, whether they would hear or whether they would forbear, that there was one treasure which the merchant man might buy without a price, and one delight better than all others, in the word and the statutes of God. Not in the wantonness of wealth, not in vain ministry to the desire of the eyes, or the pride of life, were those marbles hewn into transparent strength, and those arches arrayed in the colours of the iris. There is a message written in the dies of them that once was written in blood; and a sound in the echoes of their vaults that one day shall fill the vault of heaven. ‘He shall return to do judgment and justice.’ The strength of Venice was given her so long as she remembered this; her destruction found her when she had forgotten this; and it found her irrevocably, because she forgot it without excuse. No city ever had a more glorious Bible.”

RUSKIN'S IDEA OF RELIGION.

Doubtless it will be interesting to our readers to know more definitely in what our author supposes religion to consist. We, therefore, quote his view of the great question where he says: "Religion is the belief in a Spirit whose mercies are over all His works, who is kind even to the unthankful and the evil; who is everywhere present, and, therefore, is in no place to be sought, and in no place to be evaded; to whom all creatures, times, and things, are everlastingly Holy, and who claims—not tithes of wealth, nor sevenths of days—but all the wealth that we have, and all the days that we live, and all the beings that we are—but who claims that totality because He delights only in the delight of His creatures, and because, therefore, the one duty that they owe to Him, and the only service they can render Him, is to be happy; a Spirit, therefore, whose eternal benevolence cannot be angered, cannot be appeased; whose laws are everlasting and inexorable, so that heaven and earth must indeed pass away if one jot of them failed,—laws which attach to every wrong and error a measured, inevitable penalty, to every rightness and prudence an assured reward,—penalty, of which the remittance cannot be purchased; and reward, of which the promise cannot be broken."

Having thus expressed his idea of religion as the belief in a beneficent Creator, who will do well by His creatures, he gives us in another place his impression as to the chief defect of much of the preaching with which we are familiar. "The reason," he writes, "that preaching is so commonly ineffectual, is that it calls on men oftener to work for God than to behold God working for them. If in every rebuke that we utter of men's vices, we put forth a claim upon their

hearts; if for every assertion of God's demands from them, we could substitute a display of his kindness to them; if side by side with every warning of death, we could exhibit proofs and promises of immortality; if, in fine, instead of assuming the being of an awful Deity, which men, though they cannot and dare not deny, are always unwilling, sometimes unable, to conceive, we were to show them a near, visible, inevitable, but all-beneficent Deity, whose presence makes the earth itself a heaven, I think there would be fewer deaf children sitting in the market-place."

ACCEPTABLE SERVICE.

If from Mr. Ruskin's conception of God and of His claims we go on to consider with him what service will be acceptable in His sight, we are at once met by the injunction, "Learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." According to his idea, "the Maker of all creatures and things, by whom all creatures live, and all things consist, is essentially and for ever the Helpful One, or, in softer Saxon, the "Holy One." And since this is so, He requires, in harmony with His own character, helpfulness from His worshippers. It is an easy thing to say, "Lord, I believe," but He asks for proof of allegiance in service. Faith living must be life working. If there is no healthy thought, no helpful word, no earnest deed, a mere creed is but a worthless formula, its repetition an empty sound. It is possible even for our religion to be only a vile form of selfishness, which God will regard with indignation. This view is powerfully put in one passage where he is supposed to be addressing young girls, and in which he speaks thus: "You have, I suppose, good food, pretty rooms to live in, pretty dresses to wear, power of obtaining every rational and wholesome pleasure; you

are, moreover, probably gentle and grateful, and in the habit of every day thanking God for these things. But why do you thank Him? Is it because in these matters, as well as in your religious knowledge, you think He has made a favourite of you? Is the essential meaning of your thanksgiving, 'Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other girls are, not in that I fast twice in the week while they feast, but in that I feast seven times in a week while they fast'? and are you quite sure this is a pleasing form of thanksgiving to your heavenly Father? Suppose you saw one of your own true earthly sisters, Lucy or Emily, cast out of your mortal father's house, starving, helpless, heartbroken; that every morning when you went into your father's room, you said to him, 'How good you are, father, to give me what you don't give Lucy,' are you sure that, whatever anger your parent may have just cause for against your sister, he would be pleased by that thanksgiving, or flattered by that praise? Nay, are you even sure that you *are* so much the favourite? suppose that, all this while, he loves poor Lucy just as well as you, and is only trying you through her pain, and perhaps not angry with her in anywise, but deeply angry with you, and all the more for your thanksgiving?" Again, in one of his Oxford lectures, he makes some observations upon the "divinity of all Art when it is truly fair or truly serviceable"; and in the closing sentences he gives some thoughts upon the usual benediction which greets the ear so often, and which pleads for the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. He remarks that he does not know exactly what sense is attached to these expressions, but he wishes all to be positively assured that the three things actually exist and can be known and possessed—"First, by simply obeying the orders of the Founder of your religion, all grace, graciousness, or beauty and favour

of gentle life will be given to you in mind and body, in work and in rest. The grace of Christ exists and can be had if you will. Secondly, as you know more and more of the created world, you will find that the true will of its Maker is that its creatures shall be happy; when He has made everything beautiful in its time and its place, and that it is chiefly by the fault of men, when they are allowed the liberty of thwarting His laws, that creation groans and travails in pain. The love of God exists and you may see it, and live in it if you will. Lastly, a spirit does actually exist which teaches the ant her path, the bird her building, and men, in an instinctive and marvellous way, whatever lovely arts and noble deeds are possible to them. Without it you can do no good thing. To the grief of it you can do many bad ones. In the possession of it is your peace and your power. And there is a fourth thing, of which we already know too much. There is an evil spirit whose dominion is in blindness and in cowardice, as the dominion of the Spirit or Wisdom is in clear sight and in courage. And this blind cowardly spirit is for ever telling you that evil things are pardonable, and you shall not die for them, and that good things are impossible, and you need not live for them. . . . I pray you with all earnestness to prove, and know within your hearts, that all things lovely and righteous are possible for those who believe in their possibility, and who determine that for their part they will make every day's work contribute to them. Let every dawn of morning be to you as the beginning of life, and every setting sun be to you as its close: then let every one of these short lives leave its short record of some kindly thing done for others—some goodly strength or knowledge gained for yourselves." And now, with these helpful words yet ringing in our hearts, to find we trust some adequate response in noble living, we conclude our survey of the work and teaching of John Ruskin, and

we shall greatly rejoice if through it, hasty and imperfect though it be, we have widened in any degree the circle of those who delight in his message. "Rightly," says one, "every man is a channel through which heaven floweth," but there has flowed from John Ruskin a fulness of sweet and healing waters from the river of God such as not often proceeds from a single human life. For ourselves, it must be said that the deeper study of his works, of which this book is the outcome, has only strengthened our conviction that we have in him a teacher for whom we should thank God as for the gift of daily bread, or the sweet light of morning, or the glory of the star-lit sky when the curtain is drawn on the fleeting finite that we may behold the enduring infinite.

In any attempt to criticise Ruskin we must remember, as Carlyle has said, that before we can rightly *see*, it is needful that we should *over-see*. With regard to this great personality, this attitude of over-seeing is one which we cannot assume, and thus while we may appraise smaller things and meaner mortals, we have here an eminence which cannot be commanded. The judgment of this man must therefore be left with Him who "weighs the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance."

We have quoted largely from our author, being anxious that, as far as possible, this record of his life and work should be self-revealing, and we will close with a poem from his pen, written in his twenty-third year, which may be regarded as the choral hymn to which his earthly life has moved, while the last cadences of its high music blend with the larger life of heaven.

CHARITIE.

The beams of morning are renewed,
The valley laughs their light to see;
And earth is bright with gratitude,
And heaven with Charitie.

Oh, dew of heaven! oh, light of earth!
Fain would our hearts be filled with thee,
Because nor darkness comes, nor death
About the home of Charitie.

God guides the stars their wandering way,
He seems to cast their courses free;
But binds unto Himself for aye,
And all their chains are Charitie.

When first He stretched the signed zone,
And heaped the hills and barred the sea,
Then wisdom sat beside His throne
But His own word was Charitie.

And still, through every age and hour,
Of things that were and things that be,
Are breathed the presence and the power
Of everlasting Charitie.

By noon and night, by sun and shower,
By dews that fall and winds that flee,
On grove and field, on fold and flower,
Is shed the peace of Charitie.

The violets light the lonely hill,
The fruitful furrows load the lea;
Man's heart alone is sterile still,
For lack of lowly Charitie.

He walks a weary vale within—
No lamp of love in heart hath he;
His steps are death, his thoughts are sin,
For lack of gentle Charitie.

Daughter of heaven! we dare not lift
The dimness of our eyes to thee;
Oh! pure and God-descended gift!
Oh! spotless, perfect Charitie!

Yet forasmuch Thy brow is crossed
With blood-drops from the deathful tree,
We take Thee for our only trust,
Oh! dying Charitie!

Ah! Hope, Endurance, Faith—ye fail like death,
But Love an everlasting crown receiveth;
For she is Hope, and Fortitude, and Faith,
Who all things hopeth, beareth, and believeth.

Should our readers desire a more minute and exhaustive treatment of Mr. Ruskin's work and teaching, we heartily commend to their notice "*STUDIES IN RUSKIN*," by EDWARD T. COOK, M.A. Published by Mr. GEORGE ALLEN, Bell Yard, E.C.

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